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A Literary History of Russia

A Literary History of Russia

by

V. Brodsky

Professor of Slavonic Literature in the University of Perm

[illegible]

[illegible]

Edited by [illegible] M.A.

[illegible]

Translated by H. Havelock, M.A.

New York: [illegible]

London: [illegible]

1908

S. LUKE.

From the Gospels written for Ostromir, Governor of Novgorod, A.D. 1056-7—the oldest Russo-Slavonic M.S. The style is purely Byzantine. The inscriptions mean: "S. Luke." "Under this form of a calf the Holy Ghost appeared to Luke."

(3/7 natural size.)

A Literary History of Russia

By

A. Brückner

Professor of Slavonic Languages and Literature in the University of Berlin

Edited by Ellis H. Minns, M.A.

Late Fellow of Pembroke College, Cambridge

Translated by H. Havelock, M.A.

New York : Charles Scribner's Sons

London : T. Fisher Unwin

1908

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Table of Contents

PAGE

INTRODUCTION xiii

TRANSLITERATION OF RUSSIAN WORDS . . . xix

CHAPTER I

EARLY PERIOD 1

Country and people—Founding of the State and the Church—Old Russian life: its period of prosperity in the eleventh and twelfth, its decay in the following, centuries—State of culture and society—The sixteenth century: assimilation of the material progress of Europe—Lack of mental culture.

CHAPTER II

THE SEVENTEENTH CENTURY 36

Premature reform movement under Demetrius—Stubbornness of the Moscow reaction—The Russian schism—Polish influence and Kiev intervention—Schools and literature, the printed and the written—Direct influence of the West—Close of the Russian Middle Age, and summary.

CHAPTER III

"TRANSFORMED" RUSSIA 60

Peter's work of reform and its importance externally—Influence on literature—His clerical allies; Theophan Prokopóvich,

PAGE

Pososhkóv—The second third of the century—Rise of a secular literature—Its French tendency—Kantemír, Trediakóvsky and Sumarókov—Its German tendency—Tatíshchev and Lomonósov, with the services of the latter to science and the language.

CHAPTER IV

CATHERINE II. AND HER TIME 90

The personality of the dilettante Empress, her comedies—Two literary currents, the French with pure reason (von Vizin, satires and fables), the German with mystical and sentimental trends—The Freemasons: Nóvikov, Radíshchev, Karamzín—Complete change of spirit—Persecution of all liberal thought.

CHAPTER V

THE AGE OF ALEXANDER I. 139

The new ruler—Digging up of Catherine's mummies—Their battle against the modern tendency—Shishkóv and Karamzín—Bátyushkov—St. Petersburg literature—Rylêev and Griboêdov—The Moscovites, Karamzín the historian: Zhukóvsky the translator—Russia's classical studies—Narézhny and his novels.

CHAPTER VI

PUSHKIN 178

His youth—His schoolboy verses—As an Anacreontist and epigrammatist—His banishment—As a Byronist—His epic and dramatic poetry—Result of December 14th—As a prose-writer and lyric poet—His relations with the public and the critics—Death of the poet—His place in literature.

CHAPTER VII

THE ROMANTIC POETS 211

The Pushkin Pleiad: Délvig, Yazýkov, Baratýnsky, Venevítinov, Kozlóv, Podolínsky, Polezháev—Lérmontov, his youth, and outside influences—Social themes—Pessimism—Poetical Romances—Dramas—His position—Koltsóv and the Folk-song.

CHAPTER VIII

PAGE

THE NOVEL AND GÓGOL 237

The satirical and historical novel of Bulgárin and Zagóskin, Marlínsky and Polevóy—Comedy—Restricting influence of the Censorship—Gógol, his youthful works—The divine laughter of the "Revizór" and "Dead Souls"—Gógol's turn towards religion—The verdicts of his contemporaries.

CHAPTER IX

ROMANTIC CRITICISM—BÊLÍNSKY 267

Previous condition of criticism—Its appearance since 1820—The Romanticist critics, Venevítinov, Bestúzhev, Vyázemsky, Polevóy, Nadêzhdin—The *début* of Bêlínsky—His æsthetic and philosophical, his journalistic criticism—His influence—Reaction grows stronger — Persecutions of ideas and men — The Petrashévtsy.

CHAPTER X

SLAVOPHILES AND WESTERNISERS. ALEXANDER HERZEN . 288

First appearance of the Slavophiles—Transfer of a philological style to a political party—Mental disagreement—Westernisers with and without Catholic leanings—Chaadáev, Kirêevsky—The religious, political, and social creed of the Slavophiles—The Westernisers at Moscow—Herzen—His youth—First appearance of Iskander—His novel—His expatriation—Activity abroad, and return to Russian activity — His memoirs — Other memoir-writers of the time—Aksákov's family chronicle.

CHAPTER XI

MODERN TIMES (1855–1905). CRITICISM . . . 312

On the eve of reform—Influence of Herzen, journalist and author —Reforms: standstill in the same—Reaction: enhancing of the same up to the White Terror—Influence of criticism in the fifties and sixties, of Chernyshévsky, Dobrolúbov and Písarev—The organic criticism of Grigóriev and Strákhov—The æsthetic and idealistic criticism of Volýnsky and Merezhkóvsky—Some expositions of the History of Literature.

CHAPTER XII

PAGE

THE NOVEL. TURGÉNEV AND GONCHARÓV . . 338

The Turgénevs—Ivàn Sergêevich as a poet, as the author of the "Annals of a Sportsman"—His foreignness—Appreciation of the author—His various works: "Rúdin," "A Nest of Gentlefolk," "On the Eve," "Fathers and Sons"—Controversy concerning the novel: What was planned and what attained?—Fiasco of the succeeding novels, especially of "Virgin Soil"—Close contact with Goncharóv in the choice of subjects and heroes—Goncharóv's trilogy of the men of the forties: "An Ordinary Story," "Oblómov," "The Landslip."

CHAPTER XIII

TOLSTÓY 364

Apparent contradictions and "crises" in his evolution: its directness and logicalness—His work and autobiography—His youthful writings: "War and Peace," "Anna Karénina"—Abandons his purely literary activity—Theological controversy: "Confessions"—Popular literature: "The Power of Darkness"—Separate short stories: "The Kreuzer Sonata," &c.—"Resurrection"—Tolstóy's moral position more important than his "teaching"—The realist and opponent of all mysticism.

CHAPTER XIV

DOSTOÉVSKY 390

The Mystic and Prophet in contrast to the great Realists—His first productions give no promise of future development—Alteration in his tendency after the "Dead House" and especially since "Crime and Punishment"—"The Idiot"—"The Devils"—"The Brothers Karamázov"—His peculiar note and significance: the disturbing quality of his productions; his orthodox bias.

CHAPTER XV

MEN OF LETTERS OF THE SECOND RANK . . . 417

Other men of letters of the "forties," Grigorióvich and Písemsky—The novel with a purpose—Radical and Conservative—The men of letters of the sixties and seventies—The "Naródniki," Rêshétnikov, Levítov, Uspénsky, and Zlatovrátsky—Pomyalóvsky—Modern *belles lettres* as represented by Boborýkin or Dánchenko—The historical novel—Modern women writers.

CHAPTER XVI

PAGE

SATIRE. SALTYKÓV 452

The satire of the sixties—Saltykóv's first attempts, "Sketches from the Provinces"—How his voice has become the chorus of contemporary Russian tragedies—His enforced silence and taking refuge in pure literature—Separate works—"The history of Glúpov"—"From the domain of moderation and exactness"—"Contemporary Idylls"—The "Old Days of Poshekhónia"—The "Messrs. Golovlóv"—Significance of his satire.

CHAPTER XVII

THE DRAMA 476

Ostróvsky and his plays from the "Realm of Darkness"—His "reforming" plays—Desertion of the stage and composing of historical plays—Return to the modern stage without further decisive successes—His school—Other playwrights—Potêkhin—Historical drama—Tolstóy and Avérkiev—The modern stage.

CHAPTER XVIII

LYRIC POETS 498

Voicelessness of poetry, especially in the sixties and seventies—Poets of pure art: Tyútchev, Máikov, Foeth, Polónsky—Poets with a Purpose: Nekrásov—Poets of the People: Nikítin, Súrikov—Recent pessimistic poets: Nadson—Lyric poets and decadents of recent years.

CHAPTER XIX

THE WRITERS OF SHORT STORIES 525

Exhaustion of literature—Prevalence of smaller forms, especially the short story and the sketch—Retirement of the "Naródniki"—Pessimistic tale-writers, like Gárshin—Korolénko and Potápenko—Chékhov and Górky—Andréev—Conclusion.

INDEX 547

Introduction

WESTERN EUROPE has hitherto lacked any satisfactory account of Russian literature as a whole : there have not been wanting brilliant studies of single writers ; much has been written upon Turgénev, Dostoévsky, and especially upon Tolstoy, and isolated chapters upon most of the other well-known authors, but the development which led up to these, the environment which produced them and the lesser writers whose work throws light upon theirs, has remained obscure. What should have enabled a country which every one had regarded as not less behindhand in literature than in the other adornments of civilisation, suddenly to produce a series of writers who anticipated a point of view to which the foremost literatures of Europe were gradually working their way (for Gógol was the first realist), has been hidden from all but the few who have made a serious study, not merely of Russian literature during the last sixty years, but of the whole psychological evolution which the Russian people went through under their political and social conditions. Of the few who had studied this in the country itself and had entered into the spiritual life of a people that differs in so many ways from the Western Europeans, none seems to have been capable of playing the interpreter. It is perhaps natural that, when found, the interpreter should prove to be a Pole, a hereditary member of the European world, yet as a Slav capable of entering into the minds of fellow-Slavs. His interpretation was addressed in the first place to Germans,

but is sufficient for any Western Europeans. For as against Russia Western Europe is one, and there is no hope of as complete a revelation made to Englishmen direct.

For a Pole, however, it is difficult to be quite fair to the Old Russia with which Old Poland carried on a life and death struggle for so many centuries; especially is it hard for him to do justice to the Church with its Byzantine traditions. The opposition of Old and New Rome has, as our author says, been fatal to the Slavs, who had to take sides in a quarrel which was not of their making; but take sides they did, and though a Pole may not love Rome he will scarcely have any sympathy with Byzance or anything that springs therefrom. Hence the hostile view of Cyril and Methodius which here he hints at, and sets out at length in an article (*Archiv für Slavische Philologie*, xxviii., 1906, p. 186, *sqq.*) in which he makes the two missionaries to have had nothing less at heart than the good of the Slavs to whom they gave their lives, and among whom their work is still held in high veneration. Hence, too, he hurries through the whole early period, under-estimating what intellectual movements there were (Russia had its heretics even in the fourteenth century, and heresy must mean some independent thought), and all along fails to bring out the good side of the Church, which, in spite of its Byzantine origin and traditions, became a national institution and stood for the unity of the nation when the State had fallen into fragments, thereby keeping it alive through the long night of the Tartar domination, and again through the scarcely less danger of the troublous times when the Poles were the chief enemies: the pressure of the Church and the autocracy was then necessary to stiffen the national resistance. However, the mediæval literature is, perhaps, not what the general reader requires, yet he might have been interested in a fuller presentment of the songs of Old Russia, but these are so accessible to the English reader in Mr. Ralston's and Miss Hapgood's translations, that it has not been thought well to lengthen the book by adding a fuller treatment of them.

Throughout the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries the anticipations of coming reform are well brought out, but

again we miss a sympathetic appreciation of the picturesque side of Old Russian life—the strange literature, craftsmanship, and costume, which formed an artistic whole, though underlying this appearance there was no doubt a reality of mental and physical servitude. The portrait of Peter the Great is excellent; we are shown how small a change of principle there was between the orthodox Iván the Terrible and the introducer of all manner of unhallowed Western novelties.

It is difficult for a foreigner to be attracted by the Russian literature of the eighteenth century. It produced scarcely anything readable; the struggle to bend to a literary purpose a language, not merely uncultivated, but deformed both by the archaic dialect of the Church and by the mixed jargon of the Petrine translations, is not to be appreciated by the outsider, and a series of clumsy imitations of outworn pseudo-classical models can scarcely have for us even an historical interest. What there is the author has well set forth. The same holds good of the first quarter of the last century. Even the school of Pushkin has not much to say to us. The Russian finds in Pushkin what we find in our great poets, but when we come to him there is little new for us; yet even a foreigner can feel the wonderful melody of his verse to which no translation can do justice.

Our author traces admirably the reaction of politics upon letters from the time of Gógol to that of Górky; he gives by far the best picture of the growth of Russian literature extant, showing the causes it served (Russian books have always served a cause, if only that of "Art for Art's sake"), its prominent personalities, the lesser figures that surrounded them, and the background upon which they stood out. It remains to be seen whether the English reader, to whom things Russian are so unfamiliar, and who has such meagre translations at his disposal, can be made to care about the biting satire of Saltykóv, whose name he has never heard, or even about Gógol, to say nothing of Goncharóv, Nekrásov, the writers who described peasant life, Ostróvsky the playwright, and Chékhov, whose stories have been so strangely overlooked by the translators.

So the narrative has been brought down to the beginning of the revolutionary period. For the last three years a confusion has reigned in literature, which, while a faithful mirror of the confusion reigning throughout the country, has not been reduced to order in the least: we cannot see what are the true lines of movement, and it has been thought best to abstain from any attempt to bring the last chapter absolutely up to date.

The Editor is responsible for the verse translations, which have in every case been made direct from the Russian; while more conscious of their shortcomings than any one else can be, he felt that in dealing with poetical quotations the author's prose scarcely put the reader into the frame of mind to judge of poetical thought, so that some kind of metrical rendering was desirable. The original measure has been followed as far as possible, but it was beyond him to reproduce the rhymes and double rhymes which the structure of Russian makes comparatively easy.

The Translator has endeavoured to give the sense of his original as exactly as possible, and this has, perhaps, caused him to keep somewhat closely to its sentences at the risk of making his own style heavy, but it is too much to hope that a translation from the German shall not betray itself.

The names of the Russian authors have been transliterated on a fairly consistent system according to the annexed table, which the reader is earnestly requested to study; at the risk of leaving certain *nuances* unexpressed, an attempt has been made to render the Russian sounds with as small an aggregation of letters as possible. On the other hand, every name has, at the cost of much labour, been accented, and if the reader will lay sufficient stress upon the accented syllable the others will not much matter.

A few references have been made in the occasional notes, but on the whole the Editor has followed the author in not encumbering the pages of a popular book with indications of the sources of every statement. Something has been done to guide the reader to translations of the books dealt with; more in this way may be found in Professor L. Wiener's "Anthology of Russian Literature" (Putnam's), which gives specimens of

most of the authors mentioned. But translations are never satisfactory, and the Editor hopes that many may be tempted to learn for themselves a language whose difficulty has been much exaggerated and whose richness and beauty are worthy of the literature which in it has found expression.

E. H. M.

DIRECTIONS FOR PRONOUNCING RUSSIAN NAMES AS TRANSLITERATED IN THIS BOOK.

Pronounce **b, d, f, k, m, n, p, t** as in English.
a, as in father ; **ai** as in Italian mai = Eng. my.
ch, as in church.
e, at the beginning of all but a few foreign words, as *ye* in yet, or *ya* in Yale ; after a consonant the *y* is less distinct but is always present except after *sh, ch, zh,* and *ts*.
ê, a special letter whose sound is identical with that of *e*, **ey** as yea. Accented *e* is sometimes pronounced *yo, o,* but *ê* never.
g, always hard as in gate.
i, as in machine.
kh, as Scotch or German *ch* in loch, ach.
l, "hard," between *l* and *w*, as in people : "soft," between *l* and *y*, as in Fr. ville.
o, accented open as *oa* in broad ; unaccented as *ă* in balloon.
r, strongly trilled, when soft between *r* and *y*, but not like *ry*.
s, always as *s* in size, case, *never* as in cheese.
sh, as in shut ; **shch** as in Ashchurch.
u, as in rule, rarely as in tube.
v, as in English, at the end of words like *f*.
y, English usage has necessitated an inconsistent employment of *y*.
As a *vowel* it has been used to denote a peculiar sound between *i* and *u*, not unlike its value in rhythm ; immediately after a labial the *u* element can be clearly heard.
As a *consonant* it has been used to denote its sound in year, Goodyer, boy.
When combinations such as *iy* or *yy* would logically have resulted, *y* alone has been written as this gives the sound fairly well.
z, as in English (*not* = *ts*).
zh = Fr. *j*, Eng. *z* in azure or *si* in vision.

Consonants before *a, o, u,* vowel *y* are mostly pronounced "hard," *i.e.*, more or less as in English ; before *i, e,* and consonant *y*, "soft" —that is, run together with a *y* sound, but this must not be overdone.

Names derived from foreign words have been allowed to retain the foreign or familiar spelling.

The accented syllable is very strongly brought out, the others rather slurred over.

Literary History of Russia

CHAPTER I

EARLY PERIOD

Country and people—Founding of the State and the Church—Old Russian life: its period of prosperity in the eleventh and twelfth, its decay in the following, centuries—State of culture and society—The sixteenth century: assimilation of the material progress of Europe—Lack of mental culture.

THE history of Russian Literature must claim full attention in a special degree. Not by its age, for it is the youngest of the great literatures; not by its perfection, for it often foregoes æsthetic effects; but certainly by its peculiar character, the high humanity of its content, its naturalness and sincerity, its soaring idealism, the depth and pathos of its effects, and lastly the significance it claims in the mental life of the nation. To Englishmen or Frenchmen, Germans or Italians, polite literature is only one form for the expression of national feeling and thought: to the intelligent Russian, without a free press, without the liberty of assembly, without the right to free expression of opinion, literature became the last refuge of his freedom of thought, the only means of propagating higher ideas. He expected and demanded of his country's literature not merely æsthetic recreation: he placed it at the service of everything noble and good, of his aspirations, of the enlightening and emancipation of the spirit. Hence the striking

partiality, nay unfairness, displayed by the Russians towards the most perfect works of their own literature where they did not answer to the aims or the expectations of their party or their day. A purely æsthetic handling of the subject would not gain it full acceptance.

The historic treatment is indispensable owing to the peculiar nature of our subject, a peculiarity which has its root in Russian soil, in the temperament of the people, in the external, alien influences which totally transformed national feeling. A knowledge of the conditions under which the modern Russian spirit has developed is an indispensable preliminary to a just appreciation of its literature, the fullest and most unrestrained expression of that society.

The action of these conditions reaches back into the farthest past, extends over centuries during which there is no sort of literature, nay, not even any substitute for such, and which, nevertheless, the literary historian cannot pass over if he does not want to find himself in the nineteenth century face to face with riddles he cannot solve. But as a knowledge of Russian progress—it is not now a question of any names or dates—cannot be taken for granted as possessed by the average reader, the salient points of this progress must first be indicated.

About the Russian of to-day there is much that is alien, beginning with his alphabet, originally designed for another language and not Russian, and ending with the name of his country in its double form, the popular Rus (Chaucer's *Ruce*) and the official and antiquated Rossiya or Ross. Once everything was quite different. In the ancient home of the Slavs between the Oder and the Don, from the Carpathians to the Valdai and the Baltic, were settled in the eastern portion of it, from the Bugh and the San on, numerous small tribes speaking one dialect. Later differentiations resulted in a sort of triple partition into a Southern, Little Russian, Ruthenian or Ukraine dialect, a North-Western or White Russian, and a Northern or Great Russian. The latter, by position farthest advanced eastward and northward, and once also the most confined in point of space, acquired from Nóvgorod the Great, and later

from Moscow, its exceptional expansion and final central position, and extended farthest to east and north ; the Moscow dialect then became the written language—in short, Russian. This Russian or Great Russian also became subject to dialectical deviations, though these may be regarded as infinitesimal when we consider the vast territories which the language has made its own ; the differences of local speech to which the German, the Frenchman, or the Italian is accustomed are not to be found within the pale of Russian.

The Russian was a Slav, *i.e.*, a born anarchist, a hater of all restrictions to his freedom, unable or indisposed to construct out of his own means a firmer form of constitution. True, loyal poetry speaks throughout of the "brave and faithful Russ," and even liberal thinkers such as Kavélin endowed him with a "wonderful love of the State." Unfalsified history, however, only knows Slavs who killed their own victorious leaders so that their own liberty might not be endangered by them ; compare with this the esteem in which victorious chieftains were held among the Teutons. Thus the East-Slavonic tribes lived at feud with each other, slightly dependent on the Khazars, but otherwise wholly free under various names : on the Dnepr round Kiev, once a ferry village, the Poles, "Polane," or "people of the fields" ; on the Sozh the Radimichí ; and on the Oká the Vyatichí—*i.e.*, sons of Radim and Vyátko, or Wenceslas, the more direct ancestors of the Great Russians ; round Great Nóvgorod the "Slovenes" ; around these and others in the east and north were seated, as free and independent, Finnish tribes.

Northmen, also called Varangs (Varyági), from the Swedish coast and the Gulf of Bothnia, subjugated these Finnish and Slav tribes. They were the successors of Rurik, who ruled from Nóvgorod past Kiev as far as the Steppe, from the San and the Bugh to the Oká. The fact of the conquest was disguised by legend as a voluntary summoning of these Varyágs, which would have been of no consequence had not the Slavophiles, and others too, misused the fact in the nineteenth century and grounded upon it their dogma of the peculiar nature of the Russian Constitution. Whilst in Europe people and ruling class, *i.e.*, the conquered (provincials

to wit) and conquerors (Franks or Goths), had to bargain and wrangle over Constitutions, in Russia the people trustfully surrendered all power into the hands of the Government, which is alone responsible for the use of that power—one of the many Russian legends which are intended to make all insight into unedifying, nay intolerable, circumstances impossible.

As these Northmen united the Finnish and Slav tribes into a State, so they gave them for the first time a common name—Rus—borrowed from the Finnish way of designating the Swedes. The further extension of the territory and the name was the care of Heaven, which had bestowed the most favourable locality possible on these East Slavs. Other Slavs in their expansion encountered the sea, great ranges of mountains, formidable foes; these had to meet but apathetic Finns, who gave way to the slightest pressure. Thus the Great Russians managed, without any real conflicts, to occupy the boundless wooded plains up to the Frozen Ocean and the Ural; and when in the sixteenth century they crossed this low range of mountains, all Siberia once more lay at their feet in the same way—*i.e.*, almost without a blow struck. It was the foreign conquest and the favourable geographical situation, no subtle statecraft or merit of her own, that brought about the conditions of Russia's growth and greatness.

Thrice was there a transference of the centre of Russian power. The present centre—St. Petersburg—is only two centuries old, and stands in the midst of old Finnish surroundings. But even the one before it—Moscow—lay on the extreme verge of Slav soil, and was a recent settlement of the Vyatichí: the first alone, Kiev in the south, side by side with which in the north Nóvgorod early secured autonomy, was a very old Slav centre. Hence Kiev alone is the "mother" of Russian cities, and to her and her Grand Ducal throne go back Russian history, culture, and literature. The Russian north and east only shares passively in it: only in the South, *i.e.*, among the present Little Russians, did the old Russian life come into being. Muscovite Russia has only the merit of having preserved what was created in the south between the eleventh and thirteenth centuries. Its

own contribution may almost be described as infinitesimal. Even Nóvgorod's share, at least in the literature, was very modest. Moscow and after it St. Petersburg are thus only the heirs of the Kiev heritage.

When the State had been organised by foreigners the Church, once more through foreigners, became prosperous at Kiev. With the hand of the Greek Emperor's daughter Prince Volodímir received baptism, and thus with his people came under a spell from which deliverance was not to be found until half a thousand years later, and then once more at the hand of a Greek princess. The introduction of the Greek Church and the Slavonic Liturgy was the most fateful moment in the development of Russia, which then bartered her European birthright for a mess of pottage.

One of the most ingenious moves that ever were made on the chessboard of the world's history was the devising of the Slavonic Liturgy by the two Greek brothers from Salonìki, Constantine or Cyril and Methodius.

That which to-day the Slavs are vainly striving after, a Panslavic language—which, after all, is quite unnecessary, as there is no Pangermanic or Panromance—that these brothers accomplished in the ninth century : they simply conferred their Macedonian dialect on the Western Slavs, primarily in Moravia, with the avowed intention of gradually forcing it on all the remaining Slavs in one and the same form. Therefore they made no concessions to the special linguistic usage in Moravia, and in order to fill to the brim the measure of their arbitrary conduct, their *Byt po semù*,[1] they also devised a special and very crabbed character.[2] This national language of religion and literature was the bait to lure the Slavs from all contact with Rome, which even in the Balkan Peninsula, among the Bulgarians, was at that time endeavouring to deprive Byzantium of its supremacy.

[1] "So let it be," the formula endorsing a decree used by the Tsar, like our *Droit soit faict.*

[2] The so-called Glagolitic. There is no reason to credit the Apostles of the Slavs with ulterior objects in its invention or adaptation from Greek cursive. In fact, it is among the Roman Catholic Croats that this alphabet has survived.—E. H. M.

The ingenious plan to a large extent succeeded, thanks to Slav simplicity and vanity. The Moravians, to be sure after some hesitation, bowed the changeling out of their country; all the more zealously did the Southern Slavs, especially the Bulgarians, adopt it, for it lay nearer to them even in a purely linguistic respect, the Macedonian dialect being next-of-kin to the Bulgarian, only they finally abolished the hocus-pocus of the special character, ugly and difficult as it was, in favour of a purely Greek alphabet only, augmented by a few signs for Slavonic sounds.[1] Thus the Slavs acquired a thing neither possessed nor known by either Celts or Teutons, an ecclesiastical and written language of their own, and created for themselves in a few decades a stately store of works, although most of them were only translations from the Greek, patristic lore, encyclopædias, or chronicles. Unhappily, unfavourable external conditions soon stopped all further development of this old Slavonic, *i.e.*, old Bulgarian, literature.

Bulgaria and the Bulgarians were well known to the Russians even before A.D. 988. In spite of the fact that they had now been Christianised by the Greeks, and were during four and a half centuries for the most part to draw their higher hierarchy from Greece, the Slavonic Liturgy of the Bulgarians could, of course, not be withheld from them as Slavs. Thus they acquired all of a sudden a ready-made literature and a written language in the Bulgaro-Macedonian dialect, to which they still partly adhere to-day in orthography, phonetics, and vocabulary. Most important was the encroachment of Bulgarisms, such as Vladímir for Volodímir, nuzhda for nuzha, &c. The Russian orthography, or more properly cacography, suffers to this day incurably from a system which was partly antiquated even in the ninth century and in Macedonia. Thus the Russians all at once distanced their neighbours—Poland, Bohemia, and Hungary—and rejoiced in a written language which in the main was intelligible to them, and a literature which extended their mental horizon at one stroke. Prince Vladímir had the young taught the alphabet, even though their mothers bewailed as dead the little ones taken

[1] The so-called Cyrillic, based on Greek uncials.

away for the purpose. The eleventh century thus marked a prosperous period in old Russian life : numerous churches and monasteries arose, while Kiev shone out in almost fabulous splendour, at least according to the traditions of foreign countries. Vladímir's son, Yarosláv, whose Christian name was Yúri, whence Yúryev-Dorpat, which he founded, married his daughters to the kings of France, Hungary and Norway, and the Prince of Poland. Even Kaiser Heinrich IV. married a Russian princess. The East and West seemed destined to effect a direct exchange ; nay, even later Russian architects, or at least religious painters, found their way to Breslau. Of Yarosláv himself the chronicler records how he devoted himself to books, constantly reading in them day and night, how he brought together many clerks and made them translate from Greek into Slavonic. We still possess MSS. of the eleventh century which were made for Grand Dukes and men of rank. But the further development did not correspond with the brilliant opening.

Between Russia and Europe, Nature had erected no geographical barriers ; even ethnographically it would not always be easy to separate Poles and Russians, for instance. An insurmountable, impenetrable Wall of China was built instead, slowly, but all the more surely, by religious belief. To the middle of the eleventh century belongs the schism of the Churches, which had been preparing for centuries, furthered by Photius and the brothers of Salonìki, and finally carried through by the Erastian Cerularios. Since then Rome and Byzantium have cursed each other yearly, and the costs of the dispute have had to be paid by the Slavs, whom it did not at all concern. The Slav was always most tolerant in matters of belief, hence the readiness with which he adopted Christianity—except, of course, where, as on the Elbe or the Oder, it was a cloak for political oppression ; fanaticism, hatred, and contempt for the "heathen," *i.e.*, the Latins, were first instilled into the Russians by the Greeks. They guarded their new sheep jealously from the infection of Romish heresy, and the simple Russians soon outdid their teachers, and reproached the Romans with honouring matter as their mother, confusing *materies* with

the Slavonic *mater* = mother; declaring also that a false Peter as Pope had destroyed the old holy faith in Rome, and so on. Thus arose in the Russians the aversion to everything Latin and European.

But at home also the conditions of cultured life kept changing for the worse. If, as with the Celts, Teutons, and Bohemians, a wholly alien tongue, say Greek, had in the case of the Russians become the language of the Church and the Liturgy, there would necessarily have been schools in which that tongue could be learned; and it was not only in the Middle Ages that grammar lessons were the beginning of all instruction and knowledge. The Slavonic liturgical language, on the contrary, demanded no sort of teaching; it was enough for the pope's son to learn reading of his father for him then to be ordained. Thus there were in old Russia no schools and no instruction, save in the most perfunctory reading, but seldom in writing as well; hence all knowledge consisted in a certain familiarity with Holy Writ, especially the Psalter, in exceptional cases coupled with some acquaintance with patristic literature; the knowledge of Greek became extraordinarily rare.

That knowledge, moreover, was confined exclusively to Christian literature; if the names of a Homer or a Demosthenes are mentioned, they are only known from late and scanty excerpts. Even in Christian literature the circle was not very extended; a mere selection of sermons and the like did duty for Chrysostom, for instance. The store acquired in Bulgaria had not been further enriched on Russian soil. Moreover, the Greeks imparted to the Russians their obstinate clinging to the letter, their intolerance, and the one-sidedness of a dry-as-dust, ascetic view of the world to which all worldly action was an abomination; and thus resulted slowly a breach between the youthful, strongly pulsing life of the unsophisticated people and its gloomy and woe-begone literature, taken from monks who fled the world and preached scourgings and mortification—the sharp division between preaching and practice bringing in its train an unnatural but inevitable hypocrisy, feigning, and deceit.

In the eleventh, and even the twelfth, century the beginnings of this total estrangement between Russia and Europe, between national life and literature, had as yet taken but little hold. The people was passing through its heroic age; the Scandinavian princes and their followers had long since become Slav, even though at first they continued to do homage to their northern Thor, and to bear their Norse names—*e.g.*, Ólga (Helga), Olég (Helgi), and Ígor (Ingvar). The Grand Duke and the paladins of his Round Table risked their lives cheerfully in warding off the wild peoples on the frontier, for the widows and children at home, for the holy churches. The simple way of living knew no sharp limits of rank or caste; and a distant echo of the Homeric poems greets us in the Sagas, or "Bylíny,"[1] which still, even though in an altered guise, survive in the farthest districts, the Olónets Government on Lake Onéga, round Archangel, and in Siberia. Epic amplitude, breadth, and repetitions are their characteristics; the subjects, far from being taken from frontier warfare only, are drawn from the most varied romantic themes: conflict between father and son, a husband helped by a wife in men's clothing, adultery and the punishment of the seducer, separation of man and wife, scenes of recognition and the like. The principal heroes are unknown to history itself. Not the generous, kind-hearted, somewhat weak-willed Vladímir and his wicked, whimsical spouse, occupy the centre of the stage. There you have Ilyá of Murom, the popular hero, not unknown to German legend, the peasant's son, who, misunderstood and slighted, at the moment of greatest danger puts forth his superhuman strength—these songs know no bounds—not on behalf of the Prince or Princess, who do not matter to him because he is never loyal, but on that of the country and its hapless inhabitants, puts the enemy to flight, and as a reward for three years drinks his fill in the Tsar's "kabàks" (taverns) of "green" (*i.e.*, brandy) wine. This altruistic and democratic personage embodies the Russian ideals, which, thoroughly opposed to Greek and Teutonic, are to us

[1] For specimens of "Bylíny" *v.* I. F. Hapgood, "The Epic Songs of Russia," New York, 1886.

much more sympathetic and human. The other heroes—Dobrýnya of the golden belt, a sort of "Noble Moringer," the Don Juan Churílo, Ivánushka, with his wonderful horse, which is just as little to look at as most heroes—are less significant. Certainly it is somewhat strange to speak of these poems, which, in their wandering from the south (Kiev) to the north in the course of so many centuries have suffered considerably, under the eleventh and twelfth centuries; but decidedly they spring from that age and its conditions. The latest versions of them, which only date back to the seventeenth century, are simpler, more restrained, and jumble different themes together less. To the Slavs as such rhapsodies of that kind were unknown. Among the West Slavs, for instance, they are never found; here, we may say, external influence may partly have been at work, for the tribes of the Steppe are already full of the song of their forefathers, and the Norse princes were accompanied by their skalds. There are also special Nóvgorod songs.

To the twelfth century belong the most interesting memorials of Kiev literature, by the side of which the later Muscovite has nothing to place, although it imitates it or takes it up. The beginning of the century saw the final shaping of the Kiev chronicle. It arose in the cloister, proceeds to strictly ascetic contemplation of the course of the world, indulges in extensive instructions in belief, is fond of piecing in prayers and moral homilies; but the natural, fresh, plastic narration, the epic lingering over details, the same democratic touch as in the "bylíny," the love of truth, the fulness and exactness of the tradition, make every nation envy the Russians their chronicle. The Southern Slavs have nothing at all of the kind to record, and even the chronicles of neighbouring countries lag behind far, in spite of their better composition, their more artistic style, and the greater learning of their compilers. And what especially strikes us is the exact conception of the unity and the branching off of the whole Slavonic world, which they had at Kiev and nowhere else. This chronicle by the so-called Nestor is the basis for all later Russian chronographical continuations and compila-

tions: amongst them a work of the thirteenth century, West Russian, belonging to Halich in Volhynia, stands out, thanks to its epic fulness and the amplitude of its narrations. Let a small specimen of it suffice. "When Prince Monomakh drank of the Don out of his golden helmet one of the Princes of the Polovtses fled towards the Caucasus. After Monomakh's death the other sent his bard to him. 'Bid him now return to our land, tell him my words, sing to him the songs of the Polovtses, and if even then he will not, let him smell the steppe-herb yevshán.' So when the Khan would not return, nor listened to the songs, the bard handed to him the yevshán; the Khan smelt it, then burst into tears and cried, 'It is better to sacrifice one's bones on native soil than to be famous on foreign,' and returned home" (theme of a well-known ballad of Maikov's). We are charmed as with the magic of a glorious epic song by the description of an expedition of Prince Danílo's against the heathen East Prussians and the like. As compared with this conspicuous fulness the Northern chronicles (not excepting those of Nóvgorod) contrast very unfavourably by their dryness and stiffness: those of Moscow have already quite an official colouring—*i.e.*, they carefully avoid any unpleasant truth.

About 1110 also Abbot Daniel described his pilgrimage to the Holy Sepulchre and thus inaugurated a rich type of literature, which lasted on to the eighteenth century, afforded an abundance of native and Greek reports, and by the abundance of copies—some texts are forthcoming by hundreds—demonstrated the extraordinary interest taken by Old Russia in such writing. The oldest of these "Palmers" is to me the most interesting; the *naïveté* of the South Russian, the true devotion to his country, makes one take greatly to him, though proper description of travel is far from him. The pious wight tells the pious at home all the wonders which he made his guides dish up to him; he tells all that there is to see as if the Lord and His disciples were still on earth; scarcely does a sigh escape him over the marauding sons of Hagar. With the later narrators the wonders only increase; the most incredible relics are enumerated, such as

the planks of Noah's ark, the palms planted by Christ, and so on. Still later writers tell of the gold that flows down from the mountains of Arabia, of the Jordan, whose water flows up and down, of the city of "Egypt," meaning Cairo, with its 14,000 royal dramshops and 14,000 streets leading to 10,000 courtyards; in Jerusalem they are shown the navel of the earth, or the entrance to Purgatory, in Constantinople the Cross swinging in the air. They purposely say nothing about "Latin" relics.

To the end of the twelfth century belongs also the "Tale of the Raid of Igor," against the Polovtses in 1185.[1] The event was of small significance in itself, although not without a romantic touch: ambitious young princes undertake a venture against the bandits of the Steppes, gain advantages, are surrounded by superior numbers and cut down, one of them, Prince Igor, being taken prisoner, but escaping fortunately to his own. The narrative is somewhat cursory, only dwelling on the principal moments at which lyrical sentiment finds expression, such as the "troubled" dream of the Grand Duke with its foreboding of evil, the lament of Igor's wife, which the wind carries over the Steppe from the stockade of Putívl; like a cuckoo will she fly down the Don, wet her beaver sleeve in the river Kayala in order to wash the bleeding wounds of the Prince; she implores the wind which has blown asunder her joy on the steppes, the Dnepr to rock her husband back to her, the sun which in the drought scorched those she loved with his glow. With the mournful laments over the quarrels of the feudal princes—how Russia must groan when it thinks of the times and princes of its prime!—the joyful tone at the end contrasts doubly; heavy is the head without shoulders, ill is it with the body without a head, with Russia without Igor. But now the countryside is gay, the castles rejoice, singing songs first to the old princes, then to the young. This "Tale of Igor," composed in prose that is rhythmical in places, differs materially in tone and subject from the other ascetic literature; by its

[1] Translated by L. Wiener, "Anthology of Russian Literature," New York, 1902, vol. i., p. 81.

uniqueness as well as defective tradition it presents difficulties to the understanding, which are increased by the far-fetched, artificial language, by references to still more remote events, and the weaving in of obscure names from myths and legends. This product of Kiev and the South, whose author belongs to the following of the princes and appeals to them, was later imitated merely outwardly and without comprehension by North Russia. Still, we may allow it the merit of having preserved for us in a late MS. collection, burnt in the fire of Moscow, this peculiar little work, which, perhaps, echoes the turns of the contemporary popular epic. To the people of the day when the narrative was first made public (1800) it was welcomed as the Ossianic song of a Slav bard. The merit of North Russian literature, indeed, lay mainly in preserving for us the products of the richer and more variegated age of Kiev; for the South there was now opening a period of horrors, of confusions and dissensions, and of ultimate weakening.

Up to the twelfth century Russian life flows in an undivided stream; it is concentrated in the South, and only sends out weak feelers to North and East. But in the constant feuds of the princes the importance of the old centre, Kiev, declines; passing from hand to hand, it is at last no longer desired, and a fresh grouping of Russian territories arises, furthered by external influences. The dreadful invasions of the Tartars, the capture and destruction of Kiev in 1240, depopulated city and territory; the Church is the last to suffer from the changed conditions, yet in 1299 the Kiev Metropolitan migrates northwards to Vladímir. Thus the South is abandoned, but even in the North-West the wretched folk in bast shoes, the Lithuanians, now venture out of their woods and swamps and found at the expense of the West Russian princes a kingdom of their own, in which, to be sure, the Lithuanian element is quite inferior to the Russian in civilisation and weight. They have conflicts with the Poles concerning the heritage of the extinct princes of Halich and Volhynia, till, in 1386, a personal union is concluded between Lithuania and Poland. Thus this portion of Russia separates entirely from the East, and in time also achieves its ecclesiastical

independence, in the setting up of a new Metropolitan See of Kiev.

To match with this disruption in the West ensued the rallying of the eastern principalities round a new centre. They had partly been founded on non-Slavonic soil, that of the Finnish tribes Múroma and Mordvá, &c., in the eleventh century, and extended in the twelfth; the territory had no historic traditions, and the power of the new princes was unlimited. The most important of these princedoms was Vladímir-Súzdal, the centre of which was transferred to Moscow, and in the end the Moscow princes won the supremacy from those of Riazàn, Tver, &c., when the former Metropolitan of Kiev transferred his see to Moscow, in 1328. Much as the Greek Church, with its Erastianism, had stiffened the back of the power of the Russian princes, it now acquired exceptional importance through the incursions of the Tartars. Civil and lay life in the South was quite destroyed, the Russian princes bound to acknowledge the Horde and pay tribute; only the Russian Church escaped through the tolerance of the Tartars, increased her wealth, established her influence, and at last threw it wholly into the scale of Moscow. Thus the latter became, even in the fourteenth century, the leading State in the East, the political and spiritual heir of Kiev.

A succession of tenacious and crafty princes, who seem to us just like Orientals, ruthlessly selfish, cunning and distrustful, revengeful and insincere, hard and cruel, had laid the foundation of Moscow's greatness; basely they crouched before the Horde—in slavish submission even licked off the ground and the mane of his horse the milk drops which the plenipotentiary of the Tartar Khan expressly let fall from the cup of welcome. Thus they secured their rear and a free hand against their brethren, and used it with ruthless vigour by intriguing and bribery and denouncing them to the Horde. The Church had never let go the idea of unity, and the Metropolitan at Moscow claimed authority over the South-Western Dioceses, and in the same way the Moscow Grand Dukes adopted this aim of the Church, claiming to be successors and

heirs of the Kiev princes and entitled to issue the summons for the "unification of Russian soil." The destructive conflicts among the Tartar hordes themselves facilitated their task, and at the end of this period, about 1480, it was already notorious that neither Tartars nor Lithuanian Poles could contend with the superior power of Moscow; the eastern princedoms had all been already absorbed, and their princes become vassals of Moscow, the two commercial republics Nóvgorod (the "Naugard" of German legend) and Plescow-Pskov forced to acknowledge its overlordship. Lithuania could no longer assert any claims, soon losing ground of its own; the grave of the old Russian freedom and independence had long since been dug. A new era was dawning of cruel arbitrariness and tyranny, of spiritual one-sidedness and intolerance, of hatred and fear of novelty and of every idea, and of Byzantine stagnation in outworn grooves. Now for the first time the dragon's seed sown by Cyril and Methodius bore fruit.

The disasters of the thirteenth century had awakened anew the ascetic sentiment which was quite wanting to old Russia; the connection with Greece, which soon (after the invasion of the Latins) could no longer hold its own against the Ottomans, was broken off; Russia was left to her own spiritual powers, and their scanty development dwindled still more. Soon they fed almost entirely on the traditional religious literature. This consisted of mostly bad and literal, slavishly exact, translations of Holy Writ, the whole of which, for that matter, was not completed until 1499, and of select works of the Fathers; of some compilations of canon law and history, and some polemical treatises against Latins and Jews, partly of their own fabrication. Their history, in the same way, was only "religious," for it consisted of that of the Bible with a Byzantine continuation into which various episodes were interpolated of an anecdotic or rather story-book character about the Georgian queen Tamara and the like. *Belles lettres* were confined to the story of Alexander the Great, of the struggles for Troy, of Barlaam and Josaphat (a Buddha

legend), of the wise Akìr (maxims), fables (of "Physiologus," a natural history), and the Oriental collection of fables, the Ikhnilát. The want of *belles lettres* was replaced by apocryphal literature which captivated hearts and minds almost more than the canonical.

From the Old and New Testament Apocrypha the Russian learned of Satan's share in the Creation, his rivalry with God. The number of the fallen angels was to be filled up by men, hence Satan's fury and envy, hence Satanaial wheedles out of Adam the assignment of his race. Paradise is not destroyed: in it dwell Enoch and Elias, walking with God, and the malefactor of the cross; Móyslav of Nóvgorod, and his companions once got quite close to it. Satan resisted the building of Noah's ark with all his might, and it was then that he enticed him into drunkenness, and that cat and mouse became enemies. The thickest jungle of legends, however, surrounded Solomon; even as a child he displays his wisdom, and is in vain persecuted by his wicked stepmother, whose practices he unmasks; there are more of his judgments given. The most interesting tells us of the building of the Temple with the aid of the Kitóvras (Centaur), how Kitóvras carried off his wife, and how, under the very gallows, Solomon avenged himself; then of him and the Sibyl of Sheba.

By far more numerous and important were the legends of the Saviour and the Virgin Mary: how Mary was announced to her mother, how she served in the Temple, how her betrothed was found by a miracle with a staff, how her virginity was proof against all trials (that of the expiatory water, &c.), how the birth of the Saviour was announced by miracle in Persia. Concerning Christ what especially charmed were the tales of His childhood, with the numerous miracles, especially during the flight into Egypt, and later at Nazareth: how He was chosen one of the priests, how He corresponded with King Abgarus of Edessa, entered into brotherhood with Probus, and how He ploughed. What the canonical Gospels expressly narrate remains untouched; it is only into the gaps that Fancy intrudes; *e.g.*, they tell of the Harrying of Hell, of the chaining of Satan, and still more

exactly of the rescuing of the Fathers: Œdipus-Judas, who murdered his father and lives hideously with his mother, as also the German Pilate—had not the two Suzdal popes, on their journey to Florence in 1439, visited his native town near Bamberg?—amplify the accounts of the Passion with new details. Then the interest again turns to the Virgin—her later life in Jerusalem, her Uspénie, or Assumption, for which her Son comes down and all Apostles, even to the doubter and hesitator, assembled, and how the Jews were punished for disturbing the funeral procession.

Less thick was the web of legend around the Apostles, their conflicts with one another and Simon Magus, their wonderful journeys, partings, and meetings again (quite in the style of the Old Greek romance). With these Apocrypha about the Apostles which were partly concerned with Church Law, vied the legends of saints, especially of the most efficacious patron by water and land, Nikóla—when God dies he will be God; of George the Dragon-slayer, Russia's patron saint, specially the saint on the Russian coat of arms, honoured by the Northern founders of Moscow; of Andrew, the Apostle of the Slavs, who, coming to Nóvgorod, wondered mightily at the arrangement of the Russian "bánya" or bath. The series ended with eschatological Apocrypha, touching the appearance of Antichrist with the furnace, his victory and fall; the wanderings of the Virgin or the Apostle Paul through hell, their visions of future torments, and Mary's intercession. Especially beloved were also "Conversations of the Holy Fathers," particularly Basil, Gregory, and Chrysostom, which simply degenerate into religious riddles: what trade is the oldest on earth? (tailoring—witness Adam and Eve); what mother suckles her own children? (the sea, the rivers); when did the fourth part of the world perish? (when Cain slew Abel); when did the whole world rejoice? (when Noah came out of the ark); what creatures were wanting in the ark? (fish); who was born bearded before Adam? (the goat); and so on. These were no products of Russian fancy, all these writings which gave information exactly on the points which most attracted

the pious reader; they were one and all translations from the Greek, and some replace lost Greek originals such as the Book of Enoch. They were for the most part still produced among the Southern Slavs and only multiplied in Russia. The representatives of the Church themselves often could not well draw the line between the genuine and the spurious books, and not till the contents of the Apocrypha had long since sunk into the memory of the people did they cry out against the lies which they laid at the door of the Bogomile Bulgarian Pope Jeremias (the Bogomiles were the forebears of the Albigenses) falsely, as they are certainly Greek productions. With the growth of asceticism in Russian life the "stikhí," the pious ballads which beggars and pilgrims sang, slowly elbowed out the national and epical "bylíny," although they adopted much of their tone and expression. These stikhí are still sung—*e.g.*, that of the handsome Joseph, and of the Dove Book (in lieu of Deep), *i.e.*, the enigmatical converse of the three saints and the like (Golubínaya Kníga).

The literature just cited, with the addition of anthologies, and collections of maxims under titles such as "Golden Well" or "Chain," formed the whole stock of Russian knowledge. A science of astronomy, mathematics, geography, or medicine there was none among these scanty beginnings: for the Russian the flat earth rested on four whales; the machinery of heaven was wound up by the angels; God caused storms; they knew the four rivers of paradise, but for Europe and European used only the term "Frank"; the Pole was confused with the "Lithuanian" as a heathen. Physiology was just as little complex: Adam was formed by God out of elements, his bones of stone, his body of earth, his eyes of the sun, &c.; into the complete body, when the dog was not watching, the devil thrust seventy diseases; twelve tremblers or fevers constantly plague him. The remedies were prayers, incantations to exorcise the evil look or word, herbs, and the "báni" (baths). The Russian had a horror of purgings and clysters as devilish inventions even in the seventeenth century. Astronomy was represented by the Easter table and the various wind- and thunder-books, explain-

ing what it means when the phases of the moon fall on such and such days, or when it thunders on Monday, &c. Grammatical first principles were to some extent known from the books of John Damascene, but all instruction was wanting in the ecclesiastical language, which was putting on an ever more Russian garb of sound and forms. The texts themselves kept falling into still more hopeless confusion; every new copyist only added to the mistakes of the MSS., and the clergy soon found itself compelled to interfere. They drove the devil out by Beelzebub. The Southern Slavs who were summoned in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries to Russia for that purpose (it was known that culture had come from Bulgaria) brought corrected versions with them, but eliminated the popular expressions that were creeping into the written language, and so purified the text and defaced it on their own account by incredibly artificial and flowery language which undermined all that was valuable—nay, in the end the whole meaning. The arts of the scribe could be discerned in the "cunning weaving" of words behind which, in the end, the author had no longer any real meaning. The written language suffered from these revisions, disguisings, and falsifications till far into the seventeenth century. Often in the description of the most interesting events, *e.g.*, of the time of the "troubles" or struggles of the false Demetrius, one can only just guess the sense. At that time they even metamorphosed the expression for their own people and Church. Hitherto they had rightly been styled "pravovêrnye," or right believers; henceforth they were known as "pravoslávnye," the official term—an absurdity, wrongly translated from "orthodoxos," "doxa" = glory, *slava* instead of *vera*, faith.

As it was with regard to Knowledge so it was with Art. Buildings of size were only erected by foreign architects, Greek or "Frank," for what the Russian built fell in. Painting, exclusively religious, clung anxiously to prescription, always painted the same brown, narrow ovals, the long arms, the Old Roman or Byzantine drapery; the art of the sculptor, as being heathen, was unknown, as was

that of the medallist. Church music did not exist; only a long-drawn singing in choir was practised. To the gloomy and obstinate asceticism more and more urgently preached by the clergy every expression of sociable delight in life was a blasphemous, fiendish abomination; against secular song, dancing, and play the arbiters of conscience intervened with all conceivable threats. Even in 1647 all games, songs, and customs were forbidden in the name of the State; even in the seventeenth century the Russian was exercised concerning European dances, this seeking of corners where one had lost nothing: it was only for fools to amuse their masters with such antics. In spite of the pains of hell folks did homage to dice and chess, even in carriages on a journey. Young women delighted in song and dance with the immemorial clapping of hands in rhythm, and even this seemed to the priest a product of hell. More particularly they loved swinging, alone or in the great wheel-swing which Baron Herberstein (1518) so wondered at. The increasing intrusion of Oriental in place of European habits forced on women an increasing seclusion from all outward intercourse and, in spite of monogamy, they led a life akin to that of the harem. Even in the seventeenth century, when the French ambassador desired to wait on the Tsaritsa, his request was declined, to his great vexation, on the ground of indisposition. The simple Frenchman did not suspect that no strange man might see the Empress or any other high-born Russian woman, and later special arrangements had to be made in order that she might witness a "comedy." The only sociable amusements of the lower class consisted in boxing and bear-fights; the profligate jugglers and bear-leaders afforded them their only distraction, except that on certain days in the year they could get drunk to their hearts' desire. Even by the sixteenth century "green wine"—*i.e.*, brandy—was one of the plagues of Russia which did not spare the clergy or women. German soldiers of fortune at Vilna grossly mocked the popes as they lay drunk in the gutter.

All the more arrogant and intolerant the while became Orthodoxy, the Moscow *pravosláv'ie*, especially with reference

to Rome. In the thirteenth century certain West Russian princes, true only from political considerations (to get a crown from the Pope), had made advances to Rome. At last the danger from the Turks forced even the Greeks to sacrifice their orthodox soul in order to save their body. Emperor, Patriarch, and Bishops began the negotiations for union which at Florence led to the desired end, but at home were wrecked by the unanimous resistance of the populace and the lower clergy. The Moscow Metropolitan who took part in these negotiations and assured the Pope that the Russian bishops were not versed in the Scriptures, lost on his return both his see and his liberty, and in the fall of Constantinople they saw at once the just punishment of Heaven for the Greeks having wished to leave the true faith. And when to boot Hagia Sophia was transformed and the Patriarch had become a Turkish slave who had to purchase his see for a heavy price, Moscow proclaimed itself the third and last Rome, the last and strongest refuge of true belief, and was soon confirmed in doing so by the Greeks. Forced thereto by the weight of political relations, the West Russian Church shut itself off less sharply from the West and from Rome. When the Lithuanian Grand Duke at Kiev succeeded in setting up a new Metropolitan independent of Moscow, the latter soon waited at Constance on Pope Martin V.: the Southern Slav, surrounded by Russian Basilian monks, brought in by the Polish bishops, made a Bohemian read out a Latin translation of his address: thus came to pass as early as 1418 the first and so far the only real Panslavic Council.

The exclusion of the freer and more advanced South with its political traditions avenged itself bitterly; nothing now was able to furnish a counterpoise to the growing despotism of Moscow. This now transformed itself quite after a Tartaro-Mongolian pattern, borrowing from the Tartars not only expressions (*e.g.*, for horses), dress, institutions (the post, tolls, &c.), but above all their spirit: it slowly degraded the whole people into slaves; ripening in the hard school of the Tartars, it demanded blind submission and was unconditionally supported in it by the Erastian proclivities of the clergy.

Therein lay the only tangible outcome of the Tartar domination, though it certainly has been spoken of quite differently. First it was held responsible for the almost total want of old South Russian MSS., which one and all have been preserved for us only in North Russian copies, and the loss of unsuspected literary treasures lamented. This assumption can easily be shown to be false: the Tartar inroads laid waste and destroyed the stores of literary material only as to quantity, not quality. At least we miss nothing worthy of attention; the receptive, generally quite passive, North seems to have preserved everything for us.

Less generally approved is another deeper-reaching assumption: it hurt the feelings of Moscow in the nineteenth century that the original stock of literature had sprung up in the South, in Little Russian, "tufted" Kiev, that Nestor's Chronicle, the Tale of Igor—*i.e.*, almost all old Russian literature—had come into being without any assistance from the "bearded" Great Russians; and in order to salve wounded patriotism they invented the legend that the Tartar incursions had quite transformed the old ethnographical picture: up to 1240 the Kiev people, the Southerners, had been Great Russians, and it was only in fear of the Tartars that these had migrated with their literature and epic poems ("bylíny") to the North: nor till later did new-comers from the "Forest Country," *Polêsie*, Volhynia, &c., take their place who were Little Russians. The favourite argument for this thesis was that only the far North, Olónets, &c., had preserved the old "bylíny," whereas the Little Russians of Kiev, ever since the seventeenth century, exclusively cultivate their peculiar "dúmy," or songs of conflicts with the Poles and the Tartars, which differ wholly in subject, nay, even in style, from the "bylíny." They forgot meanwhile that Moscow and the central Governments also have no "bylíny," and thus their survival in the far North must have another and special reason, that history knows nothing of such wholesale migrations, and that such assumptions are contradicted by later experiences, seeing that at the end of the fifteenth century Kiev suffered from the Tartars it may be even more. The masses scatter indeed for the moment

before the Tartars, only to close up again after the attack. Hence the attempt of the Great Russians to filch from the Little Russians in the nineteenth century their ancient literary possessions, as they did their political freedom in the seventeenth century and in the eighteenth the social freedom of their farmers, has failed: the old Russian literature was essentially the work of the Little Russians—this name cropped up in the fourteenth century in opposition to Muscovite Great Russia—but it became the common basis for all Russians: the Great Russians only built higher upon it.

For the moment—and that moment lasted centuries—the further building was very problematical, and consisted rather in deserting the eminence once occupied; the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries indeed laid unshakable foundations for the political supremacy of Moscow, but as to culture the country sank decidedly; and for this the Tartars are not responsible, for all interference in the inner life and doings of a people was quite alien to them, the only sensible and humane trait in the Tartars and one in which the autocratic *régime* of Russia naturally does not imitate them; for this decadence the Great Russians and their national Church are alone responsible.[1] It became apparent that that Church was unable to perform its simplest tasks; the people remained at bottom strangers to Christianity, while observing the strict fasts prescribed and celebrating the noisy festivals. The alien Latin Church could point to quite different results within its pale. For the Russian there was no preaching, no joint singing by the congregation: his service, as an apt proverb declared, was the ringing of the bell, his prayers genuflexions: otherwise he was the "double believer" against whom the official Church had had to take measures, not only in the frontier districts; he clung firmly to his superstitious practices, and only held Christianity quite from the outside.

With such spiritual and cultural equipment did Russia enter on the new era. It begins here, not in 1501 but in 1472, on the day when the new Tsaritsa, the Palæologa Zoe (Sophia),

[1] This requires modification, as the Church undoubtedly kept nationa feeling alive under the Tartar yoke.—E. H. M.

entered Moscow in state. The alliance had been set going and furthered by the Greek, Cardinal Bessarion, and the Pope, with the express intention of promoting the union of the two creeds; they had no idea that they were making it impossible for ever. For now Ivàn III. openly entered on the inheritance of the orthodox Byzantine emperors; he adopted for the State coat of arms the Byzantine double eagle, the Grand Duke became Tsar (Cæsar) and soon raised a claim to the title of Emperor, and Moscow received the last consecration when its Metropolitan became Patriarch: the Oriental Patriarchs fed by their begging embassies the unbearable Muscovite arrogance. But with Zoe were inherited, not only the Byzantine aspirations and traditions (new grist to the mill of the autocracy): with her also came into the country Italian builders, such as the architect of the Kremlin, artisans who were soon joined by other foreigners. Now began the process which at last Peter the Great was to bring to a conclusion.

From this time on Moscow sought to take part in the material benefits of European civilisation: physicians and apothecaries, primarily to be sure only for the royal family, founders of bells and cannon, gunsmiths and powder-makers, and handicraftsmen of all kinds came into the country. In the long run the old armament in which one might cope with the Tartars did not suffice against the Knights of Livonia and the Lithuanians, and after the total decline of the Hordes these became the real enemy. For one thing the "ruler of all Russia" came forward as uniter of the "ancestral" territories and claimed Kiev, proceeding later to demand Vilna and Galicia also; on the other hand he must force a passage to the sea, for the neighbours threatened with death whoever tried to get through to Moscow by land. As the Black Sea remained closed for centuries yet, the struggle for the near Baltic began even in the sixteenth century: for the time the Muscovites had to be content with the daring Englishmen who found round Norway an arduous route to Archangel. They travelled through the country, laid hands upon the commerce and reported at home about everything; the customs and

ways of thinking that they chanced upon were quite remarkable.[1]

For the more determined Moscow was to take advantage of Europe's material progress the more anxiously did it defend its Oriental, Orthodox exclusiveness against any infringement. It was now that this system arrived at its fullest perfection. Under the Eastern despotism the slavish people lost all ideas of honour or manly dignity : the carrying of arms was forbidden, seldom was an insult avenged with the fist, as a rule by denunciation to a Court which was always venal. The first dignitary of the country did not venture to sign a communication to the Tsar with his Christian name, Ivàn or the like : he "beat before him with his forehead" (*i.e.*, did obeisance to the ground) with the dog's name of Iváshka, and this was not abolished till the eighteenth century. The dignitaries could be flogged out of hand ; in conferring with some foreign ambassadors one of them had boasted in the most foolish manner that everything, palms and tigers and so on, flourished at Moscow, whereupon the other corrected him. They were both thereupon flogged, and excused their absence to the ambassadors by saying they had fallen out of their sledges. Lies and talebearing were daily bread ; in what way this Oriental Moscow affected the whole land is described by Maximilian's envoy, Baron Herberstein. The two once great commercial republics, Nóvgorod and Pskov, he says, were at one time distinguished for decency and humanity, exceptional sincerity, and uprightness ; in buying, for instance, they cheated no man there, and always kept their word, once given. But now (1518) the Moscow pest has changed all

[1] A good general account of the early voyages of the English to Russia is given by Dr. J. Hamel, "England and Russia" (London, 1854 ; tr. J. S. Leigh). The original authority is Hakluyt, who tells of Sir Hugh Willoughby and R. Chancellor, Anthony Jenkinson and others. Many details of Russian life are furnished by the rhymed letters of George Turberville, a companion of the latter. These accounts have been edited for the Hakluyt Society by Mr. Delmar Morgan. More important information we find in Giles Fletcher's "Of the Russe Commonwealth," and the travels of Sir Jerome Horsey, Knt., Queen Elizabeth's Ambassador to Ivàn IV. These latter were edited by Dr. E. A. Bond for the Hakluyt Society (1856).

this, and the people is corrupt to the bottom. In Moscow, too, as soon as they begin to protest and swear be on your guard, for it is only done for treachery and deception. With regard to this unreliability folks, both at home and abroad, have always told the same story. About 1630 Prince Khvorostínin composed the first verses at Moscow on the theme, "the Moscow folks sow corn and yet live only on deception and lies," while Turgenev and Pisemsky still write on the text "the Russian lies."

The last remnant of self-respect was driven out of the people by the rule of Ivàn the Terrible; whatever seemed to betray independent aspirations was stifled in its own blood. Nóvgorod's dignity and wealth, which even in the fifteenth century had been carried off to Moscow, sank for ever; the ambition of the old *boyar* families, among which the last descendants of the old appanage princes were enrolled, culminated exclusively in not losing their places in the army or at the Tsar's table; and these disputes as to precedence at last infected the merchant class, so that even in the nineteenth century the Moscow Governor-General when inviting guests had to be most exact, for a guest would rather creep under the table than occupy a place lower than was his through his father. In return all were bound to observe the same implicit and slavish obedience towards the Tsar, and were equally his peasants, *i.e.*, serfs, so that now the Russian practised, instead of all the other virtues, one only, the heroism of slavery.

The mental condition corresponded with the moral. All Russians appeared to strangers people of similar (mental) growth, and the greater their ignorance became, the prouder they were of their orthodoxy. Thus, of the sons of the Greek Church in 1580 at Moscow not one could read the printed Greek Testament; at Vólogda the Bishop (Abbot ?) did not know the number of the Evangelists, and when an English visitor gave him the beginning of the Gospel of St. Matthew to read he could not imagine what text he had before him. They could not give information about the simplest article of faith, except to answer such questions as "Why was Mary Mag-

dalen so honoured?" with "Because she had once given her love gratis to one who asked in Christ's name." While Wycliffe and the Hussites were struggling for liberty of conscience and Luther and Calvin shaking the dogmas of the Church, Russian Churchmen were plaguing themselves with the question whether the Alleluia should be repeated twice or three times, whether when consecrating a church the course of the procession should be directed with or against the sun, whether to sing "Ospodi" or "O Ghóspodi," and so on; in the same way the non-shaving of the beard assumed a dogmatic character. Thus there were abbots who replaced the unintelligible names in the Gospel, *e.g.*, Barjona, by Slavonic words ("speak of them"). At the end of the fifteenth century at least an *attempt* at the formation of a sect had taken place; the "Judaizers" at Nóvgorod, who even found a hearing with the Metropolitan at Moscow and the Tsar's Court, seem to have gone some way towards being a rationalistic sect, and even to have denied the Resurrection; after a certain hesitation, however, Orthodoxy plucked up heart and crushed the movement by violent measures. The tendency which had conquered this false doctrine at once and with equal success attacked humane and pious ideas. Some did hold that heretics should be converted by persuasion and not by the sword, required poverty and manual labour of the monks, who were stifling in their riches, and did not regard all the works of "Holy Writ" (*i.e.*, the whole of patristic literature) as equally binding. But this freer tendency was suppressed, and, if no Inquisition tribunal were brought into play, the reason lay, not in the want of judges of heretics, but of heretics to judge.

The ignorance was total and stupendous. In vain individual Princes of the Church called for schools; the Russian dreaded all knowledge for fear of becoming a heretic. To put a stop to the increasing inaccuracy of MSS. the Metropolitan Macarius established a press, but at his death the populace fell on the devil's work and wrecked and burned it, and the two (Great Russian) printers had to flee to Lithuania; in this case to be sure the dread of the copyists that their lucrative calling might come to a stop had a large share in the matter. Thus the

Russian fenced himself in against heathenism, *i.e.*, Europe, in his vanity regarding himself as the only "true believer" on earth, and looking distrustfully even on the Greeks because of their contact with the Hagarenes. The Tsar, when at an audience a foreign ambassador had kissed his hand, at once washed off from it the contact of the heathen; and a Russian church was held desecrated if a Latin or a dog found his way into it. The country itself was carefully guarded; no one was allowed to pass in or out; towards foreign books they acted on Omar's principle: the nobleman who wanted to learn Latin did so under greater precautions than a conspiracy against the life of the Tsar would have demanded. Moreover, no Russian went abroad of his own accord, convinced that by doing so his soul's welfare would be impaired; yet of the young people whom Borís Godunòv sent abroad at the turn of the century not one allowed himself to be enticed back to Moscow.

In spite of this self-confidence there were dark spots. Those who were sworn to belief in the letter felt the ground quake under them because that letter became more and more unreliable, and corruption of the Scripture crept in; being themselves devoid of any knowledge of language or text, they could undertake no sort of correction. Moreover, people knew how widely spread the apocryphal literature was, how the village priest read in his collection the most heretical prayers and legends, about Mary asking Christ for money in vain, and wonders of that kind, and promulgated them. In this quandary they hurried to the monastery at Athos, begging earnestly for a reliable translator. Even over the Slav and orthodox Balkan, however, thick obscurity already brooded, Servia and Bulgaria were falling into their sleep of centuries; the Athos brethren hence sent only three Greeks. With one of them, the most important, Maxím, begins the martyrology of Russian literature.

He was a well educated man, a pupil of Greek and Italian schools, who knew and honoured Savonarola, which did not hinder him as a true Greek from despising everything "Latin" alike, were it Pope or Luther. He possessed

theological and philological knowledge such as no man had in Russia, an independent and strong character, zealous faith, and glowing love for his Greece, which could hope for freedom only from Orthodox Russia, yet regarded askance the usurped independence, the autocephaly of the Moscow Church. His acquirements, his character, and his love wrought his ruin.

At first, indeed, his activity in editing was received with delight; as he did not know Church Slavonic as yet he translated his Greek into Latin for the official interpreters, the "diaks," who dictated it in Russian to the scribes. But soon his prospects darkened. The Greek who learned to thread the mazes of the most tangled style could not do right; without hesitation he altered the sacred texts; but by them the holy Bishops had still saved their souls, and in so doing he brought accusations against them. At the trial one of the writers confessed that Maxím had on one occasion caused him simply to strike out some spurious lines in the holy text, and how trembling and terror overcame the writer in the process. There were other *gravamina* besides, as that he had ventured to rebuke abuses, that he was on the side of those who wanted to suppress monastic property, and that he had consorted with suspicious people. The alarmed Greek now begged permission to return to Athos, but, innocent as he was, he was flung into prison; the Patriarchs of the East espoused his cause and begged for his liberation, but he was only fettered all the more heavily; he appealed to the Moscow Metropolitan, who wrote back, "We kiss thy fetters as those of a saint, but can do nothing to help thee." Not till after thirty years' imprisonment—Herberstein believed that they had drowned the Greek—was his captivity relaxed, towards the end of his life; he could not be set free, for he had acquired too thorough a knowledge of Russia.

And yet while languishing in the harshest prison the Greek stood for a moral authority in Russia such as no man else possessed, gave decisions in matters of conscience, compiled numerous writings, carried on controversies with Latins, Lutherans, Jews, Armenians, Mahomedans, and Greeks (*i.e.*, as to their heathen wisdom); took arms against outward and

ceremonial belief which might be coupled with all sorts of wickedness, usury, and the like; fought against superstition, urged the improvement of the texts and the necessity of schools, as to which he cited the example of Paris, and expounded texts. He did not despise rhetorical ornament and made use of allegory, yet his style suffers from hard, angular, forced expressions; the stiff diction refrains from every concession to the living popular language, and makes it its task to elevate it, instead of allowing itself to be purified and vivified by it.

His ideas fell upon fruitful soil, and he found unquestioning admirers, one of whom they also buried in a cloister, while another was Prince Kurbsky. Some of his work the whole Church recognised. How little, however, the stubborn holding fast to the old could be broken through about the middle of the century is shown by the "Hundred Paragraphs" of 1551 ("Stóglav"), which even sanctioned wrong usages, such as crossing with two and not three fingers; as also by the attempts to gather together the whole of the old Russian tradition, and thus for ever secure the stronghold of spiritual culture. This was undertaken by the Metropolitan Macarius, who, in the 11,000 leaves of his "Readings" for the Church year, had collected all the lives of saints, sermons and writings of the Fathers, and by that means preserved many a relic from destruction; to his time dates back the historic compilation of the "Book of Degrees," in which the course of events is chronicled in very far-fetched language and a hypocritical tone of piety, with ascetic insertions; it is arranged according to the seventeen degrees of descent from Vladímir to Ivàn IV.; the work enjoyed for a whole century the greatest reputation, was continued and abbreviated. Historic occurrences of the age found special description, *e.g.*, the fall of the Kazan Tartar kingdom is told by a cleric who had lived for years in captivity there, in places in an epical strain: we are reminded of the style of the Psalms by an eye-witness's doleful narrative of Pskov's fall in 1510, of the overthrow of its "antiquity" and its freedom, with the apostrophe at the end, "Oh most glorious city, great Pskov, why dost thou lament

and weep?" And the wondrously fair town of Pskov replies, "How should I not lament, how should I not weep and sorrow for my laying waste? Of a truth there swooped down on me the many-winged eagle with the lion's claws in his wings and took from me my three cedars of Libanus, my beauty, my wealth, and my nobility." Thus was old Russian freedom carried to the grave for ever. Yet soon men got used to the new conditions of life, to the uniformity of the Moscow yoke for all, and exactly defined in the "Domostroy" or Household Management, with extracts from patristic literature, the character and duties of the master of a house, the using of the whip to wife, children, and servants, devout prostration before the powerful, greatest possible prudence, most judicious management, greatest piety—only it must always be displayed before everybody: such are, briefly, the principles of this immoral book. Even here every amusement, however innocent, is tabooed. In one breath we find damned gluttony, adultery, witchcraft, soothsaying, hunting with hound and hawk, horse-racing, dancing and skipping, drums and trumpets, chess and draughts—all these alike remain work hateful to God and service of the devil. One feels really sorry to know that with this codification of hypocrisy, all merely for show, only for the eye, are coupled the names of Adáshev, the gentle adviser of Ivàn IV., and of proud, free, rich Nóvgorod.

The characteristic memorial of the age, a thing unique in its kind, is the correspondence between Ivàn and Kurbsky. When the able and gallant general was defeated in the Livonian war he fled from the wrath of the Tsar to Lithuania in 1564. Ivàn called on him to return and Kurbsky attacked him for his inhumanity; as he read this letter Ivàn nailed the bearer's foot to the ground with his sharp iron stick. Irony and sarcasm, a favourite weapon of Russian literature, breathe from Ivàn's letters, from his biblical quotations, collected in furious wrath, from the turbid and roaring floods of his eloquence. Kurbsky's answers were more moderate and restrained: the real reckoning with Ivàn is given in his somewhat emphatic "Chronicle of the Grand Duchy," written after the model of Chrysostom, extending from Ivàn's youth

to 1578, the first work of Russian History that was pragmatical, had a purpose and at the same time a system, as remote from the incoherence and often only seeming objectivity of the earlier Chronicles as the eventful life of the fugitive himself from the contemplative existence and hypocrisy of the monkish chroniclers. Ivàn and Kurbsky were the most cultivated men of their day; Ivàn could hold his own with and answer even Evangelical pastors. Others of his letters also breathe the same troubled, restless, passionate spirit, the same exclusive knowledge of the Scripture and the Fathers, the same distrust and mockery. Kurbsky also shares at bottom this point of view, the indifference or actual opposition to all other knowledge as secular, of Aristotle and Plato; he himself had indeed learnt Latin in his later years, but only in order to get more easy access to the works of the Greek Fathers, whom the Latins alone knew how to publish properly, and to straighten out the "Bulgarian Fables," *i.e.*, Apocrypha, which puzzled Russian heads, such as the Gospel of Nicodemus about our Lord's Descent into Hell and the like. Kurbsky is the first protesting personality that appears in the literature, and therefore interesting.

What the Tsar and the banished *boyar* at bottom had in their thoughts was formulated energetically by a Little Russian monk on Athos, Ivàn of Víshnya, in glowing devotion to his country and her Orthodox religion, in passionate struggling against Rome and its arts. According to him the devil aimed especially at "Slavonic," *i.e.*, the Church language, because it was the most fruitful and pleasing to God; for without any heathenish devices such as Grammar, Rhetoric, Dialectic, and other vain devilries it led by simple reading directly to God. His programme of the training of youth embraced instead of lying dialectic the true and devout Breviary, in place of artful syllogisms and verbose rhetoric the devout Psalter; instead of philosophy the wine-gladdened and didactic Book of Songs, and if you would also learn the subtleties of courtly wisdom what hinders you from reading Sirach or Solomon's Proverbs? Only do not betake yourself to heathen teachers and glozing Latin lies, else will you lose your faith. The compiler boasts

that he never had any part in the art of rhetorical practice, the profession of the Greek or Latin philosophers, or learnt anything of their artful syllogisms.

And impregnably did the authority of the Orthodox Church seem established, and for ever shut in behind these Chinese walls seemed spiritual life, stifled by the barbarism of the darkest ages; and yet a new age was already heralded by precisely those to whom the patriotic and democratic monk of distant Athos addressed his passionate epistles.

In Polish and Lithuanian Russia, in Lemberg, Kiev, and Vilna matters stood as ill or in reality still worse because the clergy, especially the higher, was wholly without discipline; notorious sinners and assassins, grown old in wickedness, were nominated bishops by the king's will and the fish stank like the head of it; the lower clergy, wholly sunk into peasants, were deeply despised; the state of the Orthodox Church, especially measured by the brilliancy and importance of the Polish or Latin, was hopelessly sunken. Precisely, the comparison with the consideration, knowledge, and power of the Polish clergy could not fail to make the Orthodox question whether by adhesion to Rome—thoughts of union had never been quite eradicated—better conditions, a spiritual revival, schools and teachers, an increase in discipline and dignity, could not be gained. On the other hand, Rome and its new instrument, the Jesuit order, were almost forced of themselves into wondering whether this Orthodox Church in Poland might not be won for the United Church; it might then furnish a bridge for further steps, for the Utopian scheme of securing Moscow itself and Constantinople. The Orthodox Church in Lithuania and Poland had not much more time for delay: the wholesale desertion of the nobility, the Radzíwils, Sapiehas, &c., to Catholicism (or Protestantism) was already causing very serious harm. Thus Jesuits and Orthodox bishops met each other half-way, and the Church, in return for the retention of its language, Liturgy, and the marriage of priests, acknowledged the Roman Papacy and dogma. This step, however, met with no unconditional welcome; various magnates and even more the people,

especially in the towns, fought against it most emphatically. The battle, however, must mainly be fought with spiritual weapons, and for that knowledge and schools were indispensable.

The first intercourse with Polish-Latin literature and teaching had come about long since; even the Court of the Yagellons (only the first Yagellon loved all that was Russian, language, "bánya," and paintings, all the rest were Polish from head to foot, and the mansions of the magnates followed the example of the Court) worked for and demanded Western culture. Russians and Lithuanians learned Latin and Polish; translations from the latter begin at the end of the fifteenth century. At first these are again interesting Apocrypha: the Book of the Three Kings, by Johannes of Hildesheim, the Tundalus Vision of the Tortures in Purgatory, although Orthodoxy acknowledges no Purgatory and the like, legends of the saints (Alexis, &c.), and ascetic writings (the Dialogue of Death, &c.), found their way into Russian. Francis Skórina, of Polotsk, who though Orthodox was forced to adopt Catholicism in order to pursue his studies, the first Russian to obtain the degree of Doctor of Medicine in Italy, printed at Prague and afterwards at Vilna between 1518 and 1525 Books of the Scriptures, the Breviary, and others to satisfy the needs of his countrymen; the language of his texts in some degree accommodated itself to the West Russian. The Protestant propaganda also wanted to make use of Russian, but soon gave up its attempts, after the issue of a catechism; for the populace remained through ignorance and unshakable adherence to the Faith of their fathers inaccessible to it, while the easily-won nobility only read and wrote Polish. The Orthodox Brotherhoods, established on Western models for pious and charitable purposes at Lemberg and Vilna, as also Constantine of Ostróg, one of the richest and most powerful princes in the world, provided schools, teachers, and means; and as nothing could be done with Græco-Slavonic alone, they based on the Latin of the Polish schools their programme and their whole curriculum. Thus Russia acquired after fully six hundred years the first

establishments which deserved the name of schools and not mere spelling-classes. The Prince himself kept up a Press (the first complete Slavonic Bible appeared at Ostróg in 1581; the text is drawn from Old Russian sources) and schools, built monasteries and churches, and ordered of Polish Protestants, as his Russians were as yet not strong enough, the polemical writings for the defence of Orthodoxy against Jesuits and Catholics, which were then translated into Russian. Soon, however, his schools bore excellent fruit; there proceeded from them brilliant controversialists, the first grammarians and lexicographers. And in the same way worked the schools of the Brotherhood. But the foundation of their culture, Polish and Latin, took them wholly away from Russian soil, to which they were only attached by their creed: they wrote by the by almost exclusively Polish, like Smotritsky, the most brilliant among them, compiler of a grammar which for a century and a half regulated the laws of Church Slavonic; even their Russian writings are thought out in Polish and crammed so full of Polonisms that one would think one had Polish printed in Cyrillic before one. From Lemberg, Ostróg, and Vilna this movement, half religious, half scholastic, spread and finally transplanted itself to Kiev, which had begun at length to recover from the desolation of centuries, and was destined to raise itself once more to its former leading position in Russian spiritual life; for it was Kiev that was to pave the way for the entry of the Latin-Polish school and its scholastic methods into Moscow itself.

CHAPTER II

THE SEVENTEENTH CENTURY

Premature reform movement under Demetrius—Stubbornness of the Moscow reaction—The Russian schism—Polish influence and Kiev intervention—Schools and literature, the printed and the written—Direct influence of the West—Close of the Russian Middle Age, and summary.

At the beginning of the seventeenth century it seemed certainly as if there would be no need of Kiev intervention to introduce Western life, art, and knowledge into Moscow. The native dynasty had died out, the Tartar scion Borís, after setting aside the last heir to the throne (Demetrius), had himself elected Tsar and anointed; and although he trod wholly in the footsteps of the late rulers, posed as quite as pious and proceeded quite as ruthlessly against all "suspicious folk," exerted himself honestly for Russia's prosperity, and to please the nobility deprived the peasants of their right of transfer, he seems to have anticipated the needs of the new age and to have been more ready to make concessions to them. But he was allowed no time to do so: a conspiracy set up against him a supposed son of Ivàn, that Demetrius whom he had had murdered at Úglich, and, supported by Polish and Cossack help as well as by the discontented peasants flocking to him, Grishka Otrépiev entered Moscow as Tsar Dmitri.

The former pupil of Moscow monastic schools had in the best years of his youth sojourned in Kiev and Volhynia, consorted with religious freethinkers or Arians, and allowed the splendour of Polish life and customs to have its effect on him;

of his having in Poland gone over to Catholicism people certainly knew nothing at Moscow; his autograph declaration to the Pope has recently come to light out of the Vatican archives. What a century later Peter the Great was only to carry through with the help of iron determination and most terrible cruelty the frivolous youth thought that he could do in sport. He fell—not because of the falseness of his birth, for that point was quite secondary, and has been made prominent by Schiller quite contrary to the facts. Even the most genuine scion of Rurik would infallibly have come to grief over roast veal, table music, and not washing oneself in the "bánya" before going to church. In spite of his vanity Demetrius was really eager to know and thirsted for European knowledge, and the Jesuits who accompanied him could not serve him fast enough in that respect: he contemplated the immediate opening of High Schools in Moscow, even if he fetched the scholars at first from abroad. By this over-great eagerness for what was new, which did not go hand in hand with the necessary strictness and seriousness, he dug his own grave, wounded the religious feelings of his subjects, the only ones that they had, and irritated them into revolts which with his leniency and want of foresight had only too easy work of it. The attempt to let in freely the customs and knowledge of the West through widely opened gates was destined to fail this time. Nay, in consequence of fresh conflicts, of the threatening of Russian independence by the possibility of a Polish domination, which was only prevented by the putting forth of the whole powers of the nation, an orthodox reaction developed which seemed to throw the nation quite back into the times of the "Stóglav" and the "Domostroy"; the exceptional activity of the years 1603–13 caused indeed a whole flood of writings and counter-writings to appear, in which often among the tawdry phrases of ecclesiastical eloquence the basis of facts was there, though obscured as much as possible, but soon everything seemed to fall back into the old dead grooves. What fanatical intolerance and ignorance still prevailed was shown at the Moscow Synod of 1618. The Abbot of the Trinity Monastery, Dionysius, had been entrusted with the "purging" of the text

of a Book of Ritual: after a year and a half's work he handed it to the Deputy Metropolitan. He had on the strength of old MSS. and Greek texts made many corrections; amongst others in the prayer for the consecration of water he had set aside an absurd addition to "Enlighten this water with Thy spirit" —"and fire," because it was wanting in the Greek original and in good Slavonic texts. For this he was found guilty of heresy, excommunicated, starved and smoked, and flogged. On holy days he was brought in chains before the Metropolitan, then tied up in the courtyard and exposed to the mockings and blows of the populace. Only by energetic intercession with the Tsar and Patriarch the Patriarch of Jerusalem saved the hapless man, whom they at the same time made to expiate other equally uncommitted sins.

Naturally Moscow Orthodoxy met the Kiev people also with similar mistrust: when one of them laid his newly worked out catechism before the Moscovites, he and his work failed to stand the test; he had amongst other things included in it an explanation of clouds, storms, and the like, which they rejected as "Hellenic," heathen, and Aristotelian subleties. To his indignant rejoinder "How then could the matter be explained?" they referred him to the work of the angels ascending and descending! This backwardness of clergy and people was to avenge itself most painfully, even to the present day.

Even in the last decades of the century Moscow presented in many ways a replica of Constantinople or towns in Asia Minor in the fourth century, when temple and market re-echoed with theological wranglings, the people streamed out of the church in horror when the Patriarch failed to use the epithet Θεοτόκος, and the vegetable-women instead of selling their wares tore each other's hair over Christ's double nature. Theological disputes as to the precise words of the priest at which the transubstantiation of bread and wine took place, and when the bell should be rung, gave the masses no rest; all culminating in a movement which to this day keeps millions of Russians aloof from the life of the nation in general, the so-called Old Believers, or Raskólniks (from

Raskól, schism), at the same time the first resisters of official constraint of conscience.

The burning question of the amending of the Liturgical Texts was pressing for solution; the despotic and self-willed Patriarch Nicon, who later came into violent antagonism with the Tsar, persisted in energetic and prompt action. When this was at length carried through (1653–7) and the texts had been amended according to the Greek originals, even to the orthography of the names, a portion of the clergy and the bulk of the people raised the keenest opposition; those who clung to the old forms unchanged simply recognised the seal of Antichrist in the new spelling advocated of Jisus instead of the older Isus, Nikolái instead of Nikóla, and Paraskeva for Praskovia. They were filled with horror at the coats of arms and dedications preceding the books themselves; with alarm at the ruthless persecution of the people who crossed themselves with two instead of three fingers as Nicon "according to the heresy of Pope Formosus" ordained: the introduction of the new melodious Kiev chanting desecrated the churches for them. With some spirit of compromise and consideration the dispute might have been arranged, but these are things unknown in autocratic Russia, whose only wisdom lies in *Byt po semú*—"So be it," hence things came to a catastrophe.

The most important among the opponents of Nicon's reforms was the Protopope Avvakúm, who tells us about his life himself, and besides advocates his point of view in more than thirty petitions and the like. It is the first forcible and vigorous Great Russian that one finds to read, in places of exceptional outspokenness; with implacable anger he pursues the Patriarch and his work. What he suffered for it—hunger, flogging, years of imprisonment, the tortures of Siberia—would have broken down the most iron constitution; he emerged unshaken from these incredible tortures, and remained so to the end, until they buried his wife and children alive and burned himself; even at the stake he crossed himself with two fingers and thus defied his adversaries. For the official Church dealt unmercifully with the Old Believers who wished to adhere to the old books and forms: hanging, dismembering, tearing out

of the tongue, and burning alive were the approved methods of official zeal for conversion. "Why go to Persia to attain the martyr's crown?" jested Avvakúm. "You have but to cross yourself at Moscow with two fingers and at once the kingdom of Heaven will be open to you." And the outcome of this slaying and burning? That even to-day millions of Russians stand outside the official Church and the national life; that, starting from the simplest foundations of faith, they have at last strayed into the wildest bypaths of sectarian practice and split up into a countless number of opinions, even to the castration of the Skoptsy and the vagaries of the Dukhobors; and moreover it was the flower of the Russian people, its most serious and stable members, that was harried by the fanatical intolerance of the Church into a fanaticism which even found vent in numerous self-burnings, so as to avoid contact or communion with the Antichrist; the only ones that profited were the clergy and the officials, to whom the word *Raskól* represented the perpetual milch-cow.

The most determined persecutor of the Raskólniks was the last Patriarch of Moscow but one, Joachim (1674–1690), in reality himself the worst of Dissenters, a monster of ignorance and fanaticism, in whom, for the last time, the old national prejudice against all that was humane and reasonable was personified. He refused to sit at the same table as a man of different religion (the Tsar's General Gordon); when he fell ill he would not allow the physicians (foreigners, for there were no Russians for a long time yet) even to enter his room; in his will he implored Peter the Great to allow no intercourse of the true believers with the Church-condemned Latins, Lutherans, Calvinists, and Tartars, as being enemies of God and despisers of the Church, and to forbid wearing foreign garments. Shaving the beard made man's godlike face the mask of an ape, thought the Russian, and to wear cut-out clothes, *i.e.*, trousers uncovered, seemed to him the height of immorality. In Joachim, as in his successor Adrian, was embodied once more the Russian Middle Age, gloomy, superstitious, ignorant, intolerant, and fanatical, which, in contrast to that of Europe, extends to the year 1700. When Adrian died

in that year, Peter never again allowed the office of Patriarch to be held; at Petersburg there was no use for such a thing, and at Moscow it would have involuntarily become the centre of opposition to the new order, supposing that the torture-chamber allowed of such a thing. Not till two hundred years later (1905) was the Russian clergy, the most easily cowed of all classes, to demand earnestly the election of a new Patriarch. In contradistinction to the preceding centuries, however, the conception of the world and its course, narrowly orthodox, childishly absurd, and yet self-sufficient, was in the seventeenth century no longer the only one; the Chinese Wall had begun already to show its first gaps. Slowly the Russian gained his first insight into other and higher spiritual life, not exclusively ascetic and theological, learned to know other men and customs, found them better, and even imitated them, to the horror of the incarnate reactionaries, to whom even the Greeks and Little Russians seemed not reliable, or not pure enough.

It had in any case been easier to drive the Polish garrison out of the Kreml, where, after devouring all the rats and corpses, it boiled the Greek MSS. to broth and consumed them, than the Polish spirit out of Russia. Russians learned to know and appreciate Polish customs and culture from direct observation; with every decade Polish influence increased in secular circles at Court and among the nobility, and reached its culmination under Tsar Theodore. When he was still Heir-Apparent a Kievite dedicated to his father, Tsar Alexis, a book in Polish with the explanation: "I have published the book in Polish because I know that the Tsarévich reads books not only in our native tongue but also in Polish . . . The Senate of your Majesty also does not despise that language, but reads Polish books and narratives with pleasure." The Tsar's wife was the daughter of a Polish nobleman from Smolensk: we read of her that "she brought much good to Moscow; first of all she induced the people to lay aside their hideous, womanish loose garments, which the tyrannical Tsar had forced upon them as a punishment for cowardly flight from his army—a legendary reason, common to the traditions of many people, explaining the Oriental garb of the old Russians; then to cut

their hair and beards, as the father of Ivàn IV. had done to please his Polish wife, but had found no imitators then ; next to wear sabres at their sides ; to wear Polish outer coats (the *Żontusz*), and other things of the kind ; they began to set up Polish and Latin schools at Moscow, which some praised, while others in dispraise declared they would soon bring Polish religion and disputes into Moscow." Personal influence was also exerted by highly-placed Polish prisoners who were detained for years, such as the author and Voevode Paul Potocki. The Regent Sophia and her favourite, the highly-cultivated Prince Golitsyn, were particularly inclined to things Polish. The second half of the century was thus marked by a regular invasion of Polish books, either circulated in the original or translated.

But should any one seek for these traces in Russian bibliographies he would find himself wofully disappointed. During the whole of the seventeenth century printing is still exclusively the affair of the clergy : Moscow has a single press at the Court of the Patriarch, and there only religious books are printed in the strictest Church language ; everything secular is completely excluded. But we are in the Middle Ages : written literature goes side by side with printed, as if printing were not yet discovered (the number of readers was of course very small), and from it we learn what was in favour. We learn this, for that matter, from other sources also : the splendid version of the whole Psalter by the Pole Kochanowski was so liked at Moscow, even among people who did not fully understand Polish, that Simeon Polotsky, the Tsar's Court poet, in 1674 undertook a poetical rendering of his own in order to oust the Polish text.

At the outset the supply of *belles lettres* was replenished from Polish. They had at first been most scantily represented ; to the old stock of the religious romance some classical romances and sagas, such as the Alexandreïs, fables, and some Oriental subjects, the riddles of the merchant Basargá, with the *dénouement* like that of Semiramis and Ninus, and the Judgment of Shemyaká were added in the fifteenth century ; brought from Lombardy by the agency of the Southern Slavs and

White Russia, the legend of the king's son's Bová, which became a favourite work of the Russian people, otherwise Buovo d'Ancona, our Bevis of Hampton, from the Carolingian "Chansons de geste," and "Tristan," which, however, found no proper echo. Now the old chap-books poured in the Polish version over Russia, many being translated from the Bohemian: "The fair Magellone and her true Knight," "The Serpent-woman Melusina," "Emperor Otto and his Innocent Wife," "The Seven Wise Men," the "Gesta Romanorum," a collection of Oriental and Middle Age legends and anecdotes, in places of most unedifying contents, though always with an edifying and allegorical explanation; facetiæ, selected from a Polish collection. Only "Eulenspiegel," which was such a favourite in Poland, found no purchaser; evidently the half townish, half bucolic material was repellent. With these precursors of the novel Russia made acquaintance at a time when in Europe a higher stage of it had been reached. For true imagination they had as yet no inclination; people chose what was instructive, translated the tedious fables of Paprocki from the Dialogus Creaturarum; the ethical maxims of Zabczyć; apothegms and anecdotes from the Classical Antiquity of Budny. They were not all afraid of Catholic asceticism, so translated with abridgements the gigantic "Great Mirror of Examples," mostly stories of miracles from the Middle Ages, as edited by the Polish Jesuits; Thomas à Kempis's "Imitation of Christ," the writings of the Jesuits Bellarmine and Drechsel; allegories, those of St. Augustine and Pope Innocent III., down to simple prayers.

Stronger meat was also in request; historical literature in particular was held in esteem; thus folks read the Universal Chronicle of Bielski, the Lithuanian of Stryjkowski, Boter's Narratives, and others of the kind. They took interest in political writings, and translated the Economics of Aristotle in the amplified Polish version, and Modrzewski's books on State Reform; Polish descriptions of journeys to the Promised Land and Starowolski's description of Turkish institutions were greatly appreciated. They translated calen-

dars, medical works, the old herbals, the physiological and fabulous "Problems" of Aristotle, the book of E. Sixt on hot springs, and mathematical and grammatical treatises. In addition, many kinds of works were translated from the Latin, or even from the Dutch direct, *e.g.*, the great Middle Age collection of sermons of the Hungarian Meffreth, at the desire of Tsar Alexis, but side by side with it the excellent selenography of the astronomer Hevelius, who worked in Poland. The old and the modern, knowledge and fable, from deeply learned works to merry tales of Boccaccio or simple dream-books of Daniel, were welded together in an intellectual repertoire such as earlier Russia had not even dreamed of for comprehensiveness and many-sidedness; for the first time writing ceased to be placed solely at the service of the Church and asceticism. If the Russian had in previous centuries hesitated to tread on a piece of parchment which had been written on because the matter was sure to be sacred, now, for the first time, written as well as printed literature emancipated itself from these leading strings of the Church.

The Church itself had lent a hand to this, though not, indeed, that of the Patriarchs Joachim and Adrian. This movement also went directly back to Poland. There the Orthodox Church in its struggle against the Union forced upon it had been obliged to overcome by education and schooling its previous condition of spiritual nonage, in which it was unable even to give an account of its own belief. All Russian schools were soon outdone by that of the Kiev Metropolitan Mohíla, a Wallachian who had become quite a Pole, the Collegium Mohileanum, expanded after the pattern of the Polish colleges out of a monastery school. The curriculum of it was roughly modelled on that of the Jesuit schools, Latin with poetics and rhetoric, scholastic philosophy and theological courses to crown the studies; they not only borrowed from them laudatory verses and ornate orations to the glorification of their patrons, and to celebrate festivals, but even the Jesuit school dramas, although they limited them with greater exclusiveness to scriptural subjects and Christmas plays. At this school worked and from it issued all the theologians, or in other words men

of letters, of Western Russia, who were soon to set the fashion in Moscow itself. Teaching and method were those of the Middle Age, Latin and scholastic; they delighted in preaching, not the simple edifying word, but the far-fetched allegorical exposition which culled the most remote themes from Ancient History, from imaginary Natural History, in order to dazzle by something new, to give the most startling explanations, to stimulate the hearer by the most remote conjunctions. Especially the younger generation knew and delighted in the Classics, wrote Latin, and printed both in Polish and Russian; it belongs to both literatures.

This West Russian culture, the new Kiev activity, had by no means escaped notice in Moscow, but people regarded it at first with growing distrust. They saw in this Latin, rhetoric and scholastic only defection from the true Orthodoxy; they denied this to people who possibly had been baptized, not by immersion, but by mere sprinkling; they even went so far, at Moscow, as to rebaptize those so baptized as if they were heathen, and yet in the end, without the help of these "sprinkled," the Cherkasses (or Circassians) as the Little Russians were called from a town on the Dnepr, it was quite impossible to introduce the simplest innovation into Moscow.

Greek refugees and begging emissaries of the Oriental Patriarchs opened the eyes of the Russians as to their incredible antiquatedness. These Greeks noticed the difference between Kiev and Moscow in their own persons. In the former they felt themselves free, in the latter as if in a cage; they were even watched through the keyhole; in the Ukraine among the Cossacks people loved to attend the schools, in Moscow there were none. And ever more urgent sounded the demand of these Greeks for schools. When the people at last consented to them at Moscow, when the revision of the ecclesiastical books became more and more urgent, except the Little Russians there was no one who could conduct the schools or prepare the texts for printing; hence with the middle of the century begins the extensive exodus of Kiev scholars to Moscow. Though their knowledge might seem to Westerns one-sided and obsolete, as

compared with Moscow ignorance it signified the tardy liberation of the spirit from mere belief in the letter, it worked for the first time with logical categories, had at command a wide knowledge of literature, and transferred the Polish-Latin models to Moscow.

The spiritual life and literature of the second half of the century is materially affected by them. The most prominent among them were E. Slavinetsky—who, to be sure, was personally little to the fore, and hid himself modestly in the background of the school and the press, as the real reviser of the liturgical texts—and more particularly one Simeon Polotsky, who, a skilful courtier to boot, managed to hold his own against all attacks in a sort of confidential post under Tsar Alexis Theodore, whose tutor he was, and the Regent Sophia till his death. He is the first Russian poet, at once of the Court and religion. His verses in their rhythmical construction incline towards Polish, a language rhythmically quite differently constituted, and run counter to the Russian; they are syllabic so-called, because instead of their being founded on any rhythm only the syllables are counted, and quite inexact rhymes, for the most part merely grammatical, are used; these monstrous, wooden, inharmonious verses held their own up to the thirties and forties of the eighteenth century.

Ethically the most important Kievite was a gentle Christian, the pious and saintly Demetrius, later Bishop of Rostóv, a patient worker, who did especially good service to edifying literature by his "Menaea,"[1] Lives of Saints, partly based on those of the famous Polish Jesuit Skarga, which might have become a real popular book, and by his sermons, and to Russia by his solicitude for the school at his Rostóv; against Dissent he engaged in controversy, but only in writing. Another Kievite, Gizel, compiled a Russian chronicle, which, in spite of its harsh, strictly ecclesiastical language and other material defects, for a whole century enjoyed undeserved authority. Others, without leaving their beloved Ukraine, helped by their works to create the earliest literature, however one-sided it might be—the preacher Radivilovsky, the controversialist (in

[1] *I.e.*, readings for the months.

theological matters, of course) Galatóvsky, the poet Archbishop Baranóvich, who persistently put into rhyme everything impossible, legends, dogmatic disputes, and ascetic maxims, up to his ninetieth year; this love of metre was outdone only by another Metropolitan, Maximóvich, who sang the praises of Mary in 25,000 of the most halting verses.

The advancement of the Kievans was regarded at Moscow askance. The Old Believers were sworn enemies of those in whom they suspected only renegades, but even at the Patriarchate they were not in favour. People begrudged them their strivings after ecclesiastical independence (for their city); they were suspected of Catholic inclinations; they were accused of heresy, as regards the inception of Transubstantiation, over which the Kievans simply held fast to an older standpoint of Orthodoxy. No one, indeed, ventured to attack Simeon Polotsky, so firmly did he stand in the Tsar's favour, but they vented their anger on his devoted pupil, Medvêdev, the first great Russian scholar, even if only of the Kiev type; his knowledge, his devotion to his teachers, whom he imitated in his poems, nay plundered, he had to pay for on the scaffold; alleged political offences had to serve to hide the personal and fanatical animosity as regards the doctrine of Transubstantiation. After the execution the Kiev movement seemed suppressed. In conscious opposition to it, and its Latin proclivities, they tried at Moscow to call into existence Græco-Slavonic schools, with the assistance of the Greek Lichudes; as the attempt failed they returned to the Latino-Slavonic school type of the Kievans. Though persuaded to consent to the execution of Medvêdev, Peter leant upon the Kievans and made them his instruments in his conflict with Dissent, with superstition, and with the theoretical cravings of the Moscow clergy, and used them in particular to crush down the Orthodox Church in the State to a mere police agency, as which it still acts, without life, dignity, or importance of its own.

Not only life and the Church, literature and thought, but even the language, was for the first time lastingly smitten as

by an alien wave, through the translations and the Kievans. Hitherto the written language had remained untouched by intercourse and life; men spoke the Great Russian dialect among themselves, in the Courts and in the saloons of the Ambassadors' Office, a sort of Foreign Office, where the instructions for the Ambassadors were worked out and their reports received; but they wrote only Church Slavonic and pronounced it, following the tradition, in the Little Russian way, "h" for "g," and so forth. The differences between the two languages were so considerable that even in 1683 the Psalter was translated from Church Slavonic into Great Russian for the common good; but the Patriarch forbade the printing, and still, apart from the forbidden texts produced abroad, the Russian does not possess the Scriptures in his own language, but in the alien Church Slavonic, which, however, seems to him only antiquated, not foreign, so much has the usage of centuries modified the ear of the people. The differences may in some cases be rather considerable; *e.g.*, the title of "Quo Vadis?" Sienkiewicz's celebrated novel, is in the translation "Kámo Gryadéshi," which in Russian would be "Kudá Idyósh." In the sixteenth century a MS. translation from the Scriptures into Little Russian was made, while Skórina and the Protestant Tyapinsky printed some in White Russian, but these attempts to make them familiar to the mouths of the people remained fruitless.

This strict division of the languages permeates the whole of the old literature, but its completeness varies considerably; thus the synopsis of Gizel is written in a more exclusive Church Slavonic than the Kiev Chronicle, which is six centuries older. The former practice remained in vogue, and thus there were really two languages—the written and the spoken. Into these the Polish now found its way, and although these influences soon had to yield to other and higher ones, has, even to this day, left a deep mark on Russian. It is especially the terminology of the various ranks, citizens, coats of arms, and the like, of the army, rank and weapons, of grammar and philology, of objects of finer cultivation, from State apartments to the names of daily wants in clothes and food, even expres-

sions of politeness, in which the Polish element, often unsuspected by the Russian himself, survives since the seventeenth century. Even the Latin borrowed words in Russian which so puzzle the foreigner, spiná, luná, &c., came in through the medium of Polish, and in the same way many German words, *e.g.*, tyurmá (prison), or Thurm, púshka (cannon), or Büchse reached Moscow first by Poland and Lithuania, and through Polish forms. However the Kiev people might try they could never quite get rid of the Polish they had got accustomed to at home. The eighteenth century first slowly eliminated many Polish words, which are still noticeable in the correspondence of Peter the Great, just as it had long since mastered the Polish influence.

Yet a third period is at hand—that of the influence of the West, as it was displayed at Moscow without any Polish mediation. It centred itself in the Slobodá (Liberty) near Moscow, which at the end of the seventeenth century went forth to subdue the capital, and in the foreign regiments of the Tsars. Even in 1472 Westerns had trodden Russian soil, and their coming never wholly ceased during the sixteenth century; it was furthered by the necessity for foreign soldiers and officers, such as General Gordon, or Lefort the Swiss, of whom we hear in Peter's early history. They made their abode in the Slobodá, which was a horror to the "true believers." Here, too, Peter, who was but little watched, early made his appearance and learned to value Western ways and despise the Russian; how bitterly, for instance, he mocked the Russian clergy, and what parodies he allowed himself, though indeed only in the narrowest circle, of things that were most sacred to the Russian!

Of course, in the seventeenth century the Slobodá as yet made no formal appearance in literature, apart from products in foreign languages, *e.g.*, the interesting diary of Gordon, and yet it already takes a place here and there. Thus to it we owe the first Russian theatre. When the first Russian envoys, *e.g.*, the two Suzdalers in 1483, were sent to Europe, they were present at the performance of Mysteries, and later on, at Warsaw, of operas, comedies, and dramas, and revelled in the

remembrance of what they had seen, but it got no farther. True, the false Demetrius would have brought in the theatre like other mumming, but they only stuck Italian masks on his corpse.

Masqueradings were an abomination to the Orthodox. His Church Service indeed furnished some occasion for the making of Mysteries (the entry on an ass on Palm Sunday), but with the immobility of the Church any further development was impossible. It was the Kiev school drama that broke the ice, but Tsar Alexis demanded a regular comedy, with professional players. Luckily for him Byzantine Emperors used to attend games in the circus, thus affording an Orthodox precedent, and making it admissible to bring players in from abroad. In 1672 Colonel von Staden hired at Riga Paulsen's troupe, but it never actually came to a performance, and they at last contented themselves with getting the Protestant pastor of the Slobodá, Gregori, to train first Germans and then Russians to perform in comedies. The chief reliance of the Gregorian repertoire was therefore on sacred pieces, "Judith and Esther," together with operettas and ballets: a contemporary notice sets forth that in 1674 there was comedy before H.M. at the village of Preobrazhenskoe, and foreigners entertained H.M. with how the Empress Alaferra (!) cut off the Kaiser's head; the dramas are in prose, in five acts, with varied airs. Gregori was succeeded by another theatre-manager, the Pole Czyzynski, though we know no particulars of his repertoire. The death of the Tsar prevented a further development of this undertaking.

Thus old and new strove with each other. Now sharp prohibitions were issued of the Polish dress, for instance; now orders were given to appear at Court only in the short Polish garb, a vacillation characteristic of the age. In 1649, through the efforts of Rtishchev, the Monastery School at Moscow was founded, and entrusted to Kiev monks, but in 1650 one of their pupils writes: "Through fear of Rtishchev I deceive him, but in future I will no case learn; he who learns Latin will certainly miss the way of salvation," and so on. The number of those, however, from whose eyes the scales fell grew

visibly; especially among the great dignitaries there were to be found several of higher culture, such as Rtishchev, Ordin-Nashchokin, who had his son taught by Polish tutors, A. Matvêev, who also fostered the theatrical proclivities of the Tsar, and Golitsyn. Others even ventured, from the safety of foreign soil it is true, to acknowledge the truth about Russia. G. Kotoshíkhin, *diak* or clerk, who had been flogged once already because he had omitted a word in the title of the Tsar, had reason to fear still worse on a second offence, and preferred to flee altogether, through Poland, to Sweden, where fate, nevertheless, overtook him, as he was executed for manslaughter. At Stockholm he composed a work on Russia, as if for the instruction of foreign countries, dealing in thirteen chapters with everything, the Court, justice, the army, &c., down to private life.

Before him there were only numberless accounts by foreigners of Russia, where true and false, unavoidable errors and misunderstandings, hate and contempt, wonder and pity, produced an often distorted picture of this "barbarism," of this "Persia" or "Abyssinia," as it is still called in the conceptions of a Leibnitz!—from the detailed account of a Herberstein, through the English of a Fletcher, which even in the nineteenth century could not pass the Russian censorship, through French, Dutch, and Polish, back to German in an Olearius. Now for the first time a competent judge lifted his voice in "The Truth about Russia," and might have chosen for his work the famous motto of Gógol's "Revizor," "Don't blame the looking-glass if your mouth is crooked." They are brief but eloquent chapters concerning the boundless ignorance and insufferable arrogance of the Russian, how the *boyars* in the Council of State only know how to stick out their beards, of the falsehood and deception in every calling and walk of life, the stupidity of the women, how marriages are concluded without the young people having caught sight of each other, and what deceptions crop up in the process. Other Russians who had fled their beloved country before Kotoshíkhin shared these views with him; but he, the precursor of Herzen, first defined them in writing, though his account did not see the light till the

nineteenth century. People wanted to belittle him, they accused him of exaggeration and violent prejudice, but at bottom the same tale looks out of the writings of that most ardent admirer, the Croat Yurii Krizhanich. The fate of this man reminds one to some extent of that of an older martyr, Maxím the Greek; he too paid the penalty, this time in Siberia, for crimes he had not committed, because he seemed dangerous. His preference for Russia is explained, as in the case of Bohemia in the nineteenth century, by the oppressed conditions of his narrower home and the subjection of the Slavs to the Germans, Greeks, and Turks; only the most powerful of all States gave promise of a change in the situation, a deliverance. Krizhanich advocates the union of all Slavs, especially Russians and Poles; the religious differences have only been brought by Greece and Rome into the Slavonic world. He even advocates a Panslavic language, a mixed dialect, based on Church Slavonic, and combats most passionately the xenomania of the Slavs, their love of imitating what is foreign and valuing and placing it above what is their own. Yet this by no means hinders him from recognising other defects of the Russians, their backwardness, nay, the necessity of learning from those very foreigners they hate, and even making proposals for the increase of prosperity and the improvement of agriculture. To him, too, knowledge is power, does not evoke heresies, but removes them, and is that which is most worth striving for; in addition he preaches self-knowledge and mistrust of foreigners.

In polite literature, too, if the expression may be used, Old and New join hands, but original productions are few to vanishing point. In the spirit of the religious folk-song, the *Stikh*, we find an allegory of how misery pursues a youth because he heedlessly disregards the commands of his parents, exposes him to temptation, robs him of everything. In the West such generally ended with the ruin of the hero, but for the "pious" Russian there is a way open, the cloister at whose gates Góre (Misery) must fall back powerless, and let fall its certain prey. The features of this *Stikh* are exceed-

ingly marked. There is no want of legends which strike us by their historical, yet fantastic background, such as that of Sávva Grudtsyn and the compact with the devil which a "holy man," of course without knowing its extent, takes over. Here, again, the devil must watch the cloister gates close protectingly behind his certain prey, while the mention of the conflicts with the Poles and the siege of Smolensk lends a semi-real aspect to the pious legend. Quite adapted to Russian life is the "History of the Russian Nobleman, Frol Skobêev, and Annushka, daughter of the Sewer Nardín Nashchókin," the name we have already come across. A theme from "Don Juan"—a boy dressed as a girl wins a girl whom he could otherwise not approach—is not unskilfully transferred to Moscow, and how the cunning fellow in the end mollifies the father and mother in-law, who are horrified at the *mésalliance*, is told not without humour—a harbinger of later Russian realism.

The bulk of what was produced was theological and polemical in substance, either in favour of or against Dissent. Even such works are limited in number and extent, and the whole Moscow literature cannot bear the slightest comparison with that of Kiev, which displayed an abundance of knowledge and industry, nay, of intelligence and method and European forms, even if they were antiquated (like the "Mysteries of the man of God Alexis," &c.), and did not content itself with the mere copying of old and pious literature, did not neglect realities, and even gave proof of some historical interest. The best and the most of what was achieved at Moscow was, in fact, of Kievan origin.

Thus Old Russia was finishing its course. Towards the end of the century the dull pressure upon it begins to relax. We stand before a rapid and complete liquidation of the whole of the past, a complete breach with it. What is the significance of that past?

Its political significance was above all question: Russia had become the great Slavonic State. There were no others. Poland was at once to sink to a Russian dependency, and Peter was already so sure of the fact that, quite contrary to

his father, he was already able to devote his chief exertions to other things—the winning of the coasts and the destruction of the Turks. Russia now gathered in the profits of its advantageous geographical position; in a hundred and fifty years it had increased six-fold, and has kept the instinct of ever greater expansion to this day. But no development of culture corresponded to this gigantic outward increase. The latter had chiefly been acquired at the expense of Orientals. Numerous Tartar Mirzas were directly absorbed into the Russian nobility (Saltykóvs, Turgénevs, Aksákovs, Derzhávins, &c.). Russia was greatly orientalised from its clothing on to its conduct of life, the want of mental interests, coupled with indolence, the inclination to acts of violence, and the love for dogs, falcons, and horses. Russians produced on Europeans in the seventeenth century the same impression as Persians do on us to-day. Russian Ambassadors, for instance, behaved throughout the whole century mostly as the Persians of abominable memory in the nineteenth, so that people would have liked to assign them pigsties and stamped them at once as *mezze bestie* (half beasts); boundless drunkenness, excesses, the most furious fits of cursing, were the order of the day with the staff, their ignorance being only exceeded by their arrogance.

Towns there were none in this great peasant empire except Moscow; the rest were villages or fortresses. Of course there was no citizen class. The merchant class, peasant-like in its way of living and oriental in its cunning and unscrupulousness, plundered by the Tsar's voevodes and their diáks, embodied the ideals of the Domostróy as rich householders (*Samodúr*) or drank itself to death. Handicrafts were mostly carried on by peasants, any perfecting of them being thus excluded. The towns, from Moscow downwards, had only wooden buildings. The Kreml and the churches alone were of stone and walled round; elsewhere the fortifications often consisted merely of wooden stockades.

In the open country there were, of course, only wooden buildings, beginning with the churches, though indeed the hard winter could be got over well in them. In their wooden

homesteads the nobles abode with their numerous servants, regarding in the oriental fashion all activity as something degrading. Their descendants boasted even in the nineteenth century that they had never in their lives even drawn on their socks (*vide* Oblómov). They were the vassals of the Tsar, and their object was to make the official estates (*pomêstia*) hereditary, which they succeeded in doing (hence *pomêshchik*, lord of a manor). The *boyar* (in the Council) was such in virtue of his office, not his family, and to be styled "prince" as well seemed to him a sheer insult. There were no degrees of nobility (counts and the like), coats of arms, or primogeniture —anything that characterised the European nobility. In order to support this nobility the "little man" ("bonhomme," or *muzhlk*) laboured. The free man had long since become unfree, and as he wished to escape the load by flight or seeking other service, he was chained to the soil, so that the oppression grew with every decade until the man had been degraded into a beast of burden. The Government placed itself ever more rigidly on the side of the nobility. The secular clergy grew like peasants; only the monks, from among whom came the bishops, secured for themselves increasing landed property and a certain degree of culture. About other countries no one knew anything; travel was forbidden, except the official journeys of Ambassadors, or monks' pilgrimages to Athos or Jerusalem in search of manuscripts or their souls' welfare. Every other journey, like knowledge itself, endangered the spiritual weal of the Orthodox, for which the devil lay in wait at all corners and points—excepting the holy churches and monasteries.

Knowledge, except rudimentary theology, and arts, outside the traditional Byzantine daubing of saints and the illuminating of manuscripts, did not exist. Thus Russian envoys wondered at separate scenes in the theatre without suspecting any connection between them; for sculpture they had no eye whatever. In return the country was pious, but even the piety was fanatical and quite external. Even abroad the Russian interested himself mostly in relics, and worshipped holy water-pots from Cana or pieces of St. Peter's chain, but

foreigners noticed how absent he was at his devotions. It was only externals, trivialities, that alienated the Raskól from the Established Church. Every book was reckoned pious to start with, so none should be carried lower than in the breast-pocket. Every change made them uneasy, everything unaccustomed alarmed them. The knowledge of foreigners was accounted devilish, and intercourse with them exposed men to dangerous suspicion. The mere presence of foreign officers accounted to the Orthodox for the failure of Russian arms.

Sociableness or free intercourse was unknown. The women stayed in the secluded back rooms, of which the master of the house always kept the key in his pocket. Any one who accidentally caught sight of the Tsaritsa was punished, and there were many courtiers who never set eyes on a female member of the Tsar's family. Thus "weak" woman, at the same time the vessel of the devil, was carefully excluded from all contact with the outer world. In the training of children blows played the principal part. Even the grown-up never lost the feeling of fear, and the Russian Ambassador specially noticed that in Venice, for instance, "the people lived without fear, every man did what he would, and did not trouble himself about others."

All thought was centred on externals. The Ambassador studied for days together bowings and all sorts of titles, but often had no idea what answer he had been given in writing, hence he lied in his reports home, or noticed only names and distances. Byzantine observance of forms in religion and knowledge, blind senseless obedience to every command or arbitrariness, the killing of all pride or higher feeling and the tabooing of all thought were the marks of the men and the age.

And yet even the seventeenth century made deep breaches in the Chinese Wall behind which Russia vegetated meditatively. It was in vain that the alarm was raised by patriarchs and abbots and the Moscow Strêltsý (lit. archers), who so bitterly hated everything foreign, and whose destruction so much reminds one of the Janissaries, only that in Russia they

were cleared out of the way one hundred and ten years earlier. Nay, temporary successes of the reactionaries, as, for instance, that the foreigners were relegated to the Slobodá outside Moscow, that the influence of the Kievans was for the time broken, or the demand that if Russians were not to be spared learning, they should at least learn of Greeks, signified nothing. Because concessions had had to be made to the material requirements of the age, at length the spiritual also found a way in. The introduction of uniform and drilling of the army after the European model was only the precursor of a similar uniform handling and rough-hewing of men's minds. True, the latter could not be so quickly or thoroughly carried through, and in part has not been arrived at even yet.

Already everything proclaimed the approaching revolution. The Tsarevna, instead of entering a convent, whither all Tsar's daughters had had to go—they could not on account of their dignity be married to native grandees, and foreign countries were closed to them—swayed the reins of government, if only as Regent for her brothers, for years. Her favourite dreamed already of freeing the peasants and giving them land. To meet the threatening revulsion the reactionaries, with the Patriarch at their head, rallied round Peter, and fell from the frying-pan into the fire. Even his parents, the gentle Alexis and his pleasure-loving spouse, were no longer the rigid idols of an earlier day, and as for the son, about whom for a long time no one properly troubled himself, and who grew up among the grooms, his energy suddenly broke out in an unexpected way. He was no house-hugger who hung his head. Instead of good books and theological knowledge, what attracted him were realities and the World, of which no one had yet thought at the Kreml. Instead of pious monks he preferred to consort with the two Dutchmen, and tinkered at the old English boat until he ventured out in it on the Yauza. Such was to be the inception of the Russian Fleet. Russian envoys had before his time seen globes, and in their simplicity described them as "apples." To him the globes, astrolabes, compasses, and other instruments were interesting—nay, everything technical, if it was only child's

play for the time, such as a firework. The playing became earnest when he encountered the two *condottieri*, the Scotchman Gordon, that old, experienced, and adroit man, and Lefort the Swiss, the breezy companion, and with them drilled his soldiers at Preobrazhénskoe—*nomen omen* (*preobrazhénie*= transfiguration, after which church and village were named), and through them found delight in the European doings in the Slobodá. The Orthodox Tsar consorting with "heathens," standing godfather to their children, driving away his lawful spouse a few weeks after the wedding, and having heathen women—Anna Mons among them—as mistresses! And Peter kept speaking and thinking still more slightingly of his Patriarch, and kept feeling the impulse to see the West itself, the land of technical wonders, of learned and civilised men who would furnish him with the means of carrying out his ambitious plans. At length, in 1697, an embassy under Lefort and Golovín, a patron of the arts and sciences, was sent abroad. Its political task was insignificant and its success *nil*, but thirty-five "volunteers" were attached to it. Peter chose them from the young Court favourites, the Stólniki and Spálniki (Gentlemen of the Table and the Bedchamber), and they were to learn "navigation" abroad. They were arranged in tens, with a decurion over each, one of them being the young Tsar himself. Ben Akiba went near to being refuted.

And yet he was not so; Peter was just merely Ivàn IV. amid new surroundings—the same barbarian, worthy of the *mezze bestie* over whom he had to rule, just as sensual and cruel as Ivàn, as heartless and fond of violence, identifying himself with the State in the same way and demanding of all his subjects devotion to the service of the same, trampling down and mutilating whoever in any way resisted his levelling or enslaving men to most primitive State demands. Thus he carried through the turning of all peasants, without distinction, into serfs and put the same poll-tax on them all. Thus too he transformed the whole nobility, which had to serve in the army, about Court, or in the civil service into a troop of servants graduated into fourteen classes; everything breathes the Byzantine (or is it the Chinese?) spirit. And if Ivàn's

Church Services bordered very nearly on blasphemy, Peter's "most foolish Church Assembly," with its popes, cardinals, and bishops, was the most open contemning of all religion. The differences between the two concern little but trifles. Peter indeed laid aside Ivàn's *tartufferie;* the Fathers and incense were an abomination to him and tobacco smoke his favourite tickling of the nostrils, while the wisdom of the Slobodá was to him far more than that of Chrysostom. In certain points the comparison even turns out in favour of Ivàn, for at least he did not deliberately murder his son and heir as Peter did. Peter was not drawn more strongly towards the sea than Ivàn, only the latter met with more resistance; the Poland of Batóry was not a corpse as was that of Augustus II.; both did the same towards the autocratising of Russia. To be sure one difference there was: the women whom Ivàn loved, if you can speak of "love" in connection with him, he married one and all against the principles of the Church: Peter refrained from doing so, except in the case of his last mistress. It was not to the men, their characters and their temperaments, but to the Age that the differences were principally to be ascribed.

CHAPTER III

"TRANSFORMED" RUSSIA

Peter's work of reform and its importance externally—Influence on Literature—His clerical allies; Theophan Prokopóvich, Pososhkóv—The second third of the century—Rise of a secular Literature—Its French tendency—Kantemír, Trediakóvsky and Sumarókov—Its German tendency—Tatíshchev and Lomonósov, with the services of the latter to science and the language.

THE conception that Peter the Great was the Jupiter from whose head the Minerva of Reform sprang fully equipped has long since been rejected. Peter was not her creator, he only carried on the work of days that went before. His special importance does not lie in that; unwearyingly did he accelerate the speed of the work of reform with a superhuman and at times quite senseless energy; he, moreover, materially altered the direction it took.

Under Alexis, Theodore, and Sophia no sharp rupture with the old Moscow tradition had been made; although as compared with their vacillating father, who kept plaguing himself with all kinds of scruples, his eldest son and daughter advanced a considerable way, yet it was Peter that first set such a speed that the Old Believers justly thought that they heard Antichrist himself raving. To be sure this was not all at once, for to begin with he troubled himself but little about the Government, leaving everything as it was, and only concerned himself with the creation of a Fleet and the European organising of his Army. After the victory of Poltáva he drank to the health of his instructors, the conquered

Swedes. But, as is wont to be the case in Russia in the pursuit of material and egotistic plans, tasks of a higher order presented themselves spontaneously. What he learned on his first journey abroad in 1697–9, what in other countries were regarded as mere whims and vagaries, strange customs and arrangements, all that seemed practical and worth imitating he wanted now to transplant to Russia all at once, from the cut of clothes and the shaving of beards, which he or his buffoons performed summarily on the grandees, to the founding of museums and academies, the creation of a literature, and the revolutionising of the secular and clerical government itself.

This transformation was of gigantic dimensions, the tale of his resources very restricted, lengthy and not very successful wars called for time and means; no wonder, then, that his reform remained partial, that sham flaunted itself at the expense of reality. Another resulting phenomenon was more alarming. Until 1700 the national life had remained thoroughly harmonious; even the separating of the Raskól had scarcely been able to shake this unity: the vassal led the same life as his master, spoke the same language, and thought the same thoughts, or more properly did not think at all. To this homogeneous way of living and regarding things, this uniform roughness and want of culture, an end was put almost at one blow. The nobility whom Peter had forced out of their musings and dreamings on their estates into his service—grades in that service and rank went before all privileges of birth—laid aside its native garb, habits, and language, associated with foreigners, travelled about abroad for years, smoked and cursed, and read and thought godless things; the women deserted the gloomy cells, put on French clothing, learned to dance and play, and must needs frequent "assemblies." Officers and officials, *i.e.*, the nobility and numerous foreigners, Swedes, men of the Baltic, and Germans, now separated themselves entirely by their way of life, cultivation, feeling, and thinking from the "common people," and there set in and increased with every decade an estrangement between the thin layer of enlightened people and the millions of the popu-

lace that were groping about in the old darkness. The price that had to be paid for civilisation and parade was a very high one.

With the swiftness of the wind Peter sought to make up for what had been left undone in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, and with admirable determination made everything subserve his aims. The old capital of the country was formally deprived of its rights in favour of the new one on the sea; from the Church was taken its head—its visible crown—and the guidance of it entrusted to a pliant body, the Holy Synod. All share of the people or its representatives (in the Zemsky Sobor or National Council) in the control of the colleges or departmental boards was put a stop to. The slightest resistance, nay even the most groundless suspicion of such, was punished in the most terrible way; the Tsar did not refrain from playing the executioner with his own august hands and cutting off the heads of his subjects: the "Justice" of that age is a blood-bespattered monster, the crimes committed by her without number. The common murderer or robber when led to the place or execution need only utter the terrible password that he knew of some political ("tsarish") speech or matter to obtain deferment of execution and denounce some innocent man for some word or other, whereupon the torture-chamber at once came into play and the catastrophe broke over the guiltless and unsuspecting victim. Nay more, when Peter saw that his only son had thrown back to the pious nature of the earlier Tsars, when he found he could not hope for any energetic furthering of his life's work from him, he did not hesitate to bring him to trial, to condemn him to death, to torture him, and to have the sentence of death executed upon him. That the Tsar who calmly had his own son and heir butchered did not spare goods or blood of his subjects was a matter of course: in the Petersburg swamps one hundred thousand Russian peasants left their bones. There was no longer any possibility of resistance; Russia had again lost its will as in the year 962, and handed itself over, bound hand and foot, to the new conqueror, Progress.

More decisive even than the uncanny rapidity of Reform was its altered tendency; Peter was a stranger to the mental activity of Poland and Kiev, with its Scholastic, its Theology, its Latin, and its aversion to the realities which alone held him. In spite of its free and unpolitical life Poland had lagged behind the remainder of the West, and was sinking lower from decade to decade; it drew on the large store of civilisation garnered in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries without replacing or increasing it. Over the heads of Poles and Little Russians Peter turned directly to that West which ensured him the realisation of his wishes: any one interested in navigation or fortification—and that was Peter's case exclusively—neither Warsaw nor Kiev had anything to offer; he went to Amsterdam, to Vauban, or the arsenals of Venice. Thus it was decided that Peter, unlike his immediate predecessors (Theodore and Sophia), took for his instructor not the one-sided Latin and Catholic culture of Poland, but the practical culture of the Germans, Dutch, English, and French; and that, placing the old teachers of the Russians entirely in the background, he secured for his people direct mental contact with Western Europe, and, at least externally, at once left Poland itself far behind him.

Thus to the contemporaries of Peter, Russia appeared "newly transformed"; those that were farther away could not guess how often this "transformation" remained purely external. This is most clearly noticeable in that province in which we should soonest expect a complete revolution, that of literature; the literature of Peter the Great's day, the first quarter of the new century, is just as unripe, unoriginal, and wretchedly poor as that of the preceding quarter had been. In Literature and Art the barbarian felt no interest, and he furthered them only in so far as they directly answered his purposes, *i.e.*, approved and explained the measures of the new Government. He was impressed only by the Art which glorified his "exploits" before the wondering multitude and supplied triumphal arches, allegorical personages, and symbols of all kinds cheaply and hastily; for any other he had no understanding. It was

just the same with regard to Literature: it had only to subserve a purely practical purpose, that of dragging the Russians as quickly as possible out of their retrograde state; and as this stood most vexatiously in the Tsar's way in the technical field, his care was directed to the translating of books, and the founding of schools for navigation, fortification, and the like. Masses of such translations had been prepared even in the seventeenth century, but they lay hidden in a scanty number of copies. This did not answer Peter's purposes. He intended his translations from the first to be printed; and those older ones did not satisfy him for another reason—they were most clumsy and literal even to the order of the words; they struggled with the impossibility of meeting in Church Slavonic the requirements of another and higher type. Peter, who knew foreign languages himself, objected to this want of intelligibility and vagueness of Russian expression and repeatedly urged expressly on his translators that they were to proceed according to the sense and not the words, and that they must suit themselves, instead of the stiff Church Slavonic, to the living, modern speech of ordinary intercourse. Thus Peter created the opposition between the old and the new language, an opposition which for a full century occupied Literature.

To this contrast he even gave outward expression. For the proper province of Church Slavonic, "theology" in the widest sense of the word, he allowed the old "Cyrillic" types to hold; for the secular or "civil" literature he chose new, based on experiments by Dutch presses, which he had intrusted on the revival of Russian printing works to Thessing and the Protestant Pole and refugee Kopiewski. The present Russian script, the somewhat modified "Grazhdánka," adapted to the style of the Latin character, thus dates back to Peter, who in his restless activity found time to criticise the shape of a "p" or some other letter or draw the attention of the printers to defects in binding.

In the goodly array of translations which Peter caused to be made, for the rapid completion of which he pressed and the mistakes or omissions in which he punished unmercifully,

elegant literature is as good as not represented; not so with History, Geography, Jurisprudence, and Political Economy, quite apart from more special branches of science: Hugo Grotius and Samuel Puffendorf, Lipsius and Vauban, Huygens and Stratemann—many of these, though officially translated, were afterwards withdrawn from free circulation as dangerous to the State or to morals. Of ancient literature what most vexed the Orthodox was the publication of devil-stories from the "Metamorphoses" of Ovid and the "Æneid," even with portraits of the "devils." Others were drawn from Polish texts, *e.g.*, the Apophthegms and Anecdotes of Budny or Æsop. But Peter also had printed "Examples of how to write Compliments" from the German, both for people or princely rank, and then in a simpler style as well, and the "Honourable Mirror of Youth," an introduction to courtly usage. If hitherto, translated mainly from Polish or Latin, casual and often only manuscript Gazettes or "Courants" had announced remarkable events of the day, Peter in 1703 laid the foundation of Russian journalism by having printed the *Russian News*; in the same way he looked after the Calendar, and counted it no objection that the first issued still offered the obsolete hocus-pocus to the implicitly believing people. Of elegant literature none came into being; folks contented themselves with copies of the old narrative literature, their chap-books and merry tales, and added to them slowly productions of similar value: lyric poetry, erotic or religious, first found an entrance; Polish love-songs and pious Advent, Passion, and other "chants" became better known either directly or in a Little Russian form. They found a welcome throughout the century, and in the end found their way into the first printed song-books.

The previous century had already paved the way for all this, and the Age of Peter here also walked in paths already trodden. The same was the case with acting in the theatre, which after a lengthy pause was taken up again without greater successes being attained than, for instance, in the time of Tsar Alexis. To be sure what Colonel Staden had failed to do in 1672 Lieutenant Splavsky accomplished at Dantzig in 1702—*i.e.*,

hiring for Moscow a troupe of German players, that of Johann Kunst, of ten members. Kunst died that same year at Moscow, whereupon Fürst became director; the troupe was intended partly to act as instructors to the Russians. At the last moment Kunst hesitated and demanded security "that he with his people would at all times be able to return free, safe, and unmolested"—for old Russia let no one out again who had once fallen into her trap.

For elegant literature and the theatre the strictly practical mind of the Tsar, bent on instantaneous success and averse from all contemplation or leisure, who was even no friend to hunting as being an unprofitable pastime, had no thought to spare, even though parodies of ecclesiastical ceremonies and religious institutions attracted him. Peter regarded both from the point of view of how much they could contribute to the Europeanising of Russia, like German-cut clothes or shaving the beard. As regards the German stage, what he objected to was the perpetual sameness of the love-stories without which the drama was not to be thought of, as also the empty horse-play of Harlequin. Indeed, he once promised, of course to no purpose, his comedians a special reward if they could devise a pathetic piece without the inevitable love-making and an amusing one without the Jack-pudding. Allegories which might glorify and set forth his triumphs to the people were far more to his taste. In revenge the female members of the Imperial family took all the more interest in the performance of plays: the Tsaritsa-Dowager Praskovia, Ioann's consort, and still more the Tsar's favourite sister Natalia, whose company he loved to frequent—had she not even ventured to visit the German quarter with him?—and to please whom he witnessed her comedies. For she composed some comedies herself, of which scenes or single parts have come down to us. A German reports of the performance: "The ten actors and actresses were Russians born and had never been out of the country, so that you can easily imagine how skilful they were. The Princess composed the tragedies and comedies in the Russian language, taking the subjects sometimes from the Bible, sometimes from worldly occurrences." She dramatised

by preference the Legends of Martyrs and popular narratives such as that of Kaiser Otto, merely stringing together stray scenes and often repeating word for word speeches out of one and the other. "The Harlequin, a superior officer, intervened now and again with his antics, and last an orator came on the scene who told the story of the action and depicted the hideousness of rebellion and its sordid and miserable end." The piece to which Weber's account refers is unknown. With the early death of the Princess in 1716 her theatre came to an end. Things went back to foreign troupes, to harlequinades at Moscow and mysteries at the ecclesiastical seminaries, *e.g.*, at Rostov, of which many are preserved, such as the "poetically wreathed garland for the Chief Martyr Demetrius" performed by "the students of Grammar in 1704." Better known and more interesting is the Christmas Play, performed in 1702, where the shepherds are typical Great Russian peasants, all for that matter copied from Polish Christmas plays. The "Spiritual Ordinance" even prescribed such representations so that the pupils might acquire "Resolution, *i.e.*, rational boldness" in appearing, quite after the manner of the Jesuit school.

Accordingly for literature as such there was no provision made in the "newly-modelled" Russia. What exclusively practical aims Peter followed is clear from his decision with regard to German writings in connection with a book on "Farming," abbreviated by himself (in 1724): "Whereas Germans are wont to fill out their books with many useless recountings, merely in order that they may seem great, all this shall not be translated, but only the matter itself and a short preface which shall not serve for idle ornament but the instruction of the reader; therefore I corrected the portion about agriculture, striking out what was superfluous, and after this pattern the whole book is to be translated, without the superfluous explanations which only waste time and take away all pleasure from the reader."

Thus the first quarter of the century was a mere period of transition which only laid the foundation for the mental emancipation of Russia. In this work to a predominating

extent clerics themselves took part, and although ecclesiastical literature and its Little Russian compilers do not come within our view, let us here briefly notice their activity as a sign of the times. It was precisely through Peter that the invasion of the Little Russians, which had halted during the last years of the seventeenth century, became an accomplished fact. No later than 1701 the Græco-Latin Slavonic School at Moscow was wholly remodelled on the lines of that of Kiev.

"Remodelled" Russia could least of all hope for its love to be requited at the hands of the Moscow clergy. The last Patriarch Adrian expressed himself thus with regard to shaving the beard: "To leave oneself only a moustache, God did not make men like that, but cats and dogs—only look frequently at the picture of the Last Judgment, you will see on the Saviour's right all bearded men, while to His left stand the Basurmans (Mussulmans), Heretics, Lutherans, and Poles, and other such shavers of the beard," which same the Patriarch solemnly cursed, speaking in doing so from the hearts of all Moscow folk.

Peter turned to the men of Kiev, although even here disappointments were not spared him: first to Stephan Yavorsky, the pupil of the Jesuit and Kiev schools, their poet-laureate and ablest Latinist, with whom he had accidentally made acquaintance at a funeral sermon. The "Preachings of Sir Yavorsky" pleased Peter so extraordinarily that he named him Bishop and Vicegerent of the Patriarch, and believed he had found in him the advocate and defender of all his measures. But when Peter did not appoint him Patriarch, and Yavorsky saw how the Church was held in subjection under him, and what burdens he laid upon it, exactly the reverse resulted and went on gathering way from year to year; Peter's defender became, as far as fear would allow of it, his accuser, and played him grievous tricks, as by setting on foot a prosecution against the Moscow physician Tveritínov, who exactly shared Peter's views with regard to Orthodoxy, and if he did not bring him to the stake, he did a fellow-prisoner of his, for which Peter banned him with disfavour. His literary performance was chiefly of a polemical nature; he wrote the most comprehensive

refutation of Protestantism ("The Rock of Faith," forbidden under Biron), but his arguments were borrowed from Catholic polemics. The Orthodox conviction that Peter on account of his dress, his smoking, &c., was the Antichrist incarnate, for the spreading of which Talitsky suffered death by slow fire, he confuted in the same way with Catholic arguments as to the true appearance of Antichrist.

While this man of Kiev ended in joining in with the old Muscovites on the ground that Church interests were endangered, Peter found in another an all the more pliant tool. Theophán Prokopóvich was far more cultivated and clever, but at the same time crafty and cruel, not hesitating as a Prince of the Church to hand over innocent men to the torturers merely in order to keep up his personal position. He had the utmost indifference to his own class and creed: an uncompromising admirer of the secular supremacy of the Tsar, an intriguer and a lickspittle, he remains a most unattractive phenomenon. One is only sorry to see the cause of enlightenment, of the setting free of knowledge and society, and of the new theory of the world, advanced by such hands. He imbibed his hatred of Orthodoxy and Catholicism, his Protestant servility toward every worldly authority, even at the Jesuit college at Rome. There, too, he hardened a wonderfully keen memory, acquired his extensive store of knowledge, and became zealous for multifarious interests which placed him far above the contemporary princes of the Church. When after his home-coming from Rome and reversion to Orthodoxy, which he had had to renounce during his period of study, he taught at what had been the college and was now the academy at Kiev, Peter grew to value the skilful panegyrist, and summoned him at last to Petersburg, where he found opportunity as Court chaplain to unmask in the pulpit the pretensions of the clergy to form a state within a state, and to belaud all Peter's measures, such as the disinheriting of the Tsesarévich. He was a Protestant from head to foot; and that such a one should, in spite of the machinations of his opponents, who early spied out the wolf in sheep's clothing, have held his own as Archbishop of

Nóvgorod till the end of his life was a true sign of the times in "remodelled Russia." He hated and fought against two things, the darkness of ignorance in the people, and the priestly—*i.e.*, independent—spirit in the clergy. Hence Peter could find no more sincerely devoted admirer or more facile tool. Thus he compiled the "Spiritual Ordinance" which settled the principles of Church discipline, the abolition of the Patriarchate, the regulation of the Synod, the secularising of monastic property, and the advancement of learning for the clergy, and satirically made a mock of his opponents. His literary activity was multifarious, beginning with his Kiev school essays on poetry and rhetoric and his school play, "Vladímir," acted in 1705 (subject, the conversion of Russia; he makes even Vladímir complain of Russian hate of knowledge, and his heathen priests Swiller, Ox-devourer, and Fowl-swallower are modelled on his intimate colleagues), down to his theological controversies with Yavorsky and others, his attempts at history, his writings for the young, and a Catechism. They were partly published late, partly translated early, the "Ordinance" into German as early as 1725. He wrote in Russian and in Latin verses, *e.g.*, the "Praise of Galileo," and Polish verses at Kiev. Although he did not know German, he placed Germany above all other countries because of its culture. But this is not the place for details regarding him and his numerous fellow-workers.

We stand at a parting of the ways. Yavorsky and Prokopóvich are the two last clerics that the literary historian needs to mention. Whereas up till then all literature had been cultivated exclusively by clerics, and there were scarcely any secular writers, Peter's reforms aimed at the creation of a purely secular literature, although he himself, for want of suitable powers, still had to call in the aid of clerics in the making of translations. Whereas hitherto outside the Church, the monasteries, and their schools no learning was forthcoming, and hence learning was wholly subject to the spiritual authority without any life of its own, Peter now makes it independent; he creates the first technical schools, and presses for the establishment of elementary schools ("Ciphering Schools"); though,

indeed, the easiest task he had was to dare the utmost and found an Academy of Sciences with German men of learning, and his creation retained this monopoly of Germans down to our days, although it did not come into being till after his death. From his time on, and owing to him, the clergy and literature, which had hitherto gone hand in hand, part company for ever. The former has its special schools, the Moscow and Kiev Academies, &c.; its scholastic learning, which for many decades suppresses the trend initiated by Prokopóvich; its peculiar character and language, and its own narrow field: the latter we see freeing itself from the narrow, ascetic view of the world, espousing the cause of knowledge, truth, and life, and shaking off with the old script and language the dominion of religious exclusiveness. The two tendencies will never come in contact again; the former remains excluded from our delineation.

Thus Peter's reign drew near its close without having enriched literature materially or directly; it was not even equal to supplying a History of Russia that answered Peter's expectations. Gizel's Synopsis, with its fables of Noah's times, enumeration of the Voevodes of Kiev, and silence on the subject of recent Moscow History, was the last thing that could satisfy him; it was far easier, for instance, to translate a Universal History (the Lutheran Stratemann's "Theatrum," which was confiscated from Peter's daughters on account of Lutheran tendencies) which should oust the old "Chronographs" of Byzantine memory. Apart from this, historical literature, except Mankíev's "Yadró" or "Kernel," meant nothing but narratives and occasional writings, some of polemical tendency, *e.g.*, directed against Charles XII., and the beginnings of the Class of Memoirs. These are more or less detailed descriptions of travel which the pioneers of enlightenment—the Tolstoys, Sheremétevs, and Kurákins—wrote down for their families as memorials of their enforced sojourn abroad. These records have often in our days first come to light out of family archives. Diaries and journals of travel, though without literary or historical value, they are often interesting as characterising the travellers themselves. With what

feelings the Russians of that day marvelled at the wonders of Europe! Yet they were entirely devoid of any sense of nature or art; and their itinerary, too, was often forced on them; *i.e.*, they had to learn to handle compass and map, to manage a ship in peace and war, and, if possible, shipbuilding itself, and then prepare with dread for the day of the last judgment—their examination before Peter himself. No wonder then that, tortured by age or seasickness, they were at times truly laconic in their reports. The most detailed of these Travels is Tolstoy's, 1697–99—a journey for purposes of study; the most costly that of Sheremétev—an embassy in 1697; the most fashionable that which took Matvêev to Paris in 1705. The simplicity and originality of these grown-up children is often most amusing; as they do not write for the public their judgments are often quite unflattering, as, for instance, that of Prince Kurákin on "Little Paris," so materially different—"But for these occasions, the three Fairs, the city is dreadfully dull for gentlemen to live in." He pronounced the Jesuit School at Prague the best "Academy" in Germany, with its ample and true learning. The sage Tolstoy ("If that head were not so wise I should long since have cut it off," Peter told him), be it remarked, is an ancestor of our Leo.

Just as Peter arranged these journeys, and thus evoked the description of them, so his reign with its revolutions and changes furnished food for all sorts of projects and plans of reform, in which for the first time public opinion ventured forth out or its nonage and voicelessness. Among these project-mongers the most peculiar was a man of the good old times, a substantial farmer, J. Pososhkòv, who had to expiate his most well-meant zeal in the Fortress of Peter and Paul; he thus consecrated that mausoleum for living Russian authors. Among his writings the most important is "The Book of Poverty and Wealth," which, as he himself expected, was to cost him freedom and life. The man was, in modern terminology, "untrustworthy and restless," *i.e.*, he had the audacity to keep his eyes open and give voice to what he saw. That he did it out of ardent patriotism, because it made his blood boil that "we are a byword and a mocking to our neighbours, who regard us as

Mordvinians," and that he clamoured for at least Turkish justice and order, naturally aggravated his guilt. He was an Old, then a True Believer, hated strangers, but was glad to learn from them. The fiery zeal of his Tsar infected him, but he saw at the same time that his work of reform was not succeeding as it should; that the effect of the multitude of new laws remained but slight; for, indeed, the Tsar and nine others were pulling upwards, but the millions were tugging downwards. The old Russian "injustice" overmatches the Tsar's "justice," and therefore he throws light on this injustice in all its refuges, in the practice of law and in government. But he is a simple farmer; he does not know how to alleviate the evil fundamentally; he does not promise himself overmuch from his palliatives, and hopes everything from an assembly of delegates of all classes, which must find the needed new "Regul" ("Code")—for how could a single man accomplish this? Thus there is alive in him the remembrance of the Zémsky Sobór; and for this, of course, he is thrown into prison, and dies there. Of the necessity and profit of learning from those more advanced this simple, superstitious farmer and opponent of Dissent had clearer conception than many cultivated Russians of the nineteenth century. And other things, too, showed unhampered vision: his realising, to wit, that the wealth of the country depended on that of the people, not the Treasury; that too little consideration was shown to the trading class; how the highly-born are led on to lawlessness and the like. All these writings were not published till late, partly in our own days; his contemporaries learned nothing either of them or their author. If Pososhkóv could even find sensible people among the Mordvinians, he was himself an example of what the Russian peasant could do under more favourable circumstances, when his thoughts were not wholly directed to the question of the efficacy of Fridays or the number of wafers at the Mass. True between 1700 and 1725 the peasant was not yet so brutalised and ground down as a century later; besides which precisely the movement evoked by Dissent had roused him to shake off the Slavic apathy and indolence. This fanatic lover of truth or justice and martyr to his conviction also became

spiritually mature in this movement. He resembled his great ruler in this, that in the end practical questions occupied him wholly, but the starting-point was quite different. Pososhkóv wanted to see justice incarnated on earth; his Tsar only strove for power. The subject was a Christian, his lord a heathen.

Other reformers and works on reform of the age cannot claim any general interest; they only prove that vegetating in the old grooves seemed impossible; the extensive demands of the age in men and resources had to be reckoned with; to draw back or give up what was already attained was least of all possible for the autocracy. Therefore the cruelty with which, in his anxiety for his life's work, he raged against his own flesh and blood was superfluous and useless; worse acts could not have been committed under Alexis than under his successors, for even the most orthodox proclivities would not have yielded an inch more of the shore of the Baltic.

Retrogression would rather have been possible in culture, as, even without Alexis, things came almost to a complete standstill, though not in all provinces. Thus, under Peter, manuscript elegant literature had made no material progress, as though in the troublous times, with their overthrowing of plans, reforms, and changes, inclination and leisure even for that sort of thing were not forthcoming. In revenge there was in the second quarter of the century quite a remarkable increase in the number of translations. But a small amount came to be printed; much only now crops up out of MSS., as when, in 1905, the able inquirer into Kiev literature, Sipovsky, published a large collection. The goodly number of copies, even of lengthy productions, shows, however, the interest with which they were received. Nor were new translations from the Polish, as in the old days, wholly lacking; already attempts at similar production and imitation were on the increase, the bulk derived directly from German and French models; works were already current, such as "The Asiatic Banise" and "Telemaque"; and if early stories had only awakened the sense of the marvellous, in the newer sentimentality already asserted its rights in the speeches and letters of the lovers. Some of these novels of

adventure or humorous *fabliaux*—as, for instance, the lovers of the faithful wife in the three chests—bore Russian names or are tricked out with traits from Russian life. The tendency to sentimentality is also betrayed by the invasion of erotic lyrics, which, however, can rise but little above commonplace and sheer imitations; even Peter's daughter found a place among these Minnesingers.

It is not only this branch of literature that, in the good old fashion, is left to manuscript, to anonymous generation and circulation. Even professional *literati* at starting contented themselves with triumphs within the narrowest circle of men of like tenets, or for various reasons withheld their efforts from publication altogether. Two tendencies already manifest themselves: the one, in the spirit of Peter, rests on German intellectual activity, and marks an epoch in Russian culture in the person of Tatíshchev, to be followed by Lomonósov; the other imitates the elegant literature of the French, and is thus more important to our purpose, represented by Kantemír, followed by Trediakóvsky and Sumarókov, the arch-poets of the age. Both Kantemír and Tatíshchev still work wholly in private, as in the time of Ivan and Kurbsky. Prince Kantemir was by birth a foreigner, a Wallachian, like the Mohilas and Kheráskovs. Foreign names swarm in Russian literature, as they do in society, the Germans, to name only the best-known, being von Vizin, Chemnitzer, Küchelbecker, and Grech; while Wallachian and Tartar families have already been mentioned, and Kachenovsky is a Greek. Poles are numerous, beginning with Gozwinski in the seventeenth century, through Bulgárin and Senkovski, of unhappy memory, down to Barancevicz and Jasinski in our own days. Kniazhnín is a poet's name both here and there, while the Soltyks, Aksaks, and Korsaks of Poland crop up in Russia as Soltykóvs, Aksákovs, and Korsákovs. The Little Russians also furnish a goodly contingent, Narezhnys, Gogol, and names in "-enko," apart from the older Kiev writers. The mixture of races in the empire might reasonably be expected to find its echo in a similar one in literature, but in most instances this alien origin, even with Lérmontov, has no significance; and

this must be expressly dwelt on, because in some cases false deductions are drawn from it, particularly in the case of Kantemir, whose Wallachian origin is made responsible for his syllabic verses, as if that age knew any other kind.

Kantemir's home-training was completed at the Academy Gymnasium at St. Petersburg. For in accordance with the strictly practical view of Peter, the German academicians were not only to make discoveries and exploit Russia's historical past and geological conditions, but also to preside over schools; and thus an Academical Gymnasium, since it never got really as far as a University, eked out a chequered existence. Here he made acquaintance with the classics, especially his favourite, Horace. He made his first public appearance with a well-meant but ill-executed version of the Psalms (1727), quite after the pattern of the Kiev "poets." What rescued him from the oblivion he well deserved for it was what he never printed, his Satire. In spite of his ascetic verses, be it known, he was quite on the side of the Progressists like Prokopóvich, and was enthusiastically attached to Peter, as is clear, unhappily, from an unfinished "Petreid," with an offence against good taste in every line. But the year 1729 stood wholly in the sign of Reaction, and the reproach was becoming more frequent that knowledge was harmful and begot heresies, a reproach which, above all, must seem most unfounded in Russia, where Dissent and its errors were the offspring of the blankest ignorance. Prokopóvich took up his position towards this foolery even in the "Ordinance." Kantemir combated it in his satire, "On the Blasphemers of Knowledge." These were followed by others, mostly in the form of epistles. Their author endeavoured in the forties, when he was Ambassador in Paris, to publish them, but death overtook him. They first appeared in a French prose translation, from which a German rhymed one resulted—after which well-approved recipe many a German "translator from the Russian" works to this day. In the Russian original they did not appear till 1762, when their syllabic verses had long since become a curiosity.

These Satires, when in 1729 and after Prokopóvich's

encouragement in the following years they came into being, were something quite new, because the *genre* was quite alien from the old strictly ecclesiastical literature, and were a novelty also in this respect, that they for the first time based themselves on French models, such as Boileau ; and they paved the way in poetry for French classics as opposed to the Latin-Polish tendencies. His successors followed Kantemir's example ; they adapted French plots to Russian surroundings, and thought they became native when they replaced French names by Russian. Kantemir, to be sure, went somewhat further, and aimed at Russian personalities, *e.g.*, Bishop Dáshkov, the fiercest enemy of Prokopóvich. Otherwise his satires have a very general application. Their most salient trait is his grudge against the clergy and his adoration for Prokopóvich. The language is clumsy and loose, not to say coarse, and falls hopelessly behind its models, the versification monotonous and halting. Kantemir is, in his odes, epistles, epigrams, fables, and translations, above all a didactic writer. One of his translations, from Fontenelle, "On the Multiplicity of Worlds," caused bad blood in Russia, as being based on the Copernican system. The book was denounced to the Tsaritsa as blasphemous, because it dwelt on the self-control of nature, by Abrámov, once director of Peter's press, and in his old age an arch-reactionary and informer, but whose informings had done most harm to himself—a case quite unheard of before in Russia.

Kantemir clothed new and enlightened ideas in the old shapeless form, but an author by profession—even though he concerned himself with theoretical questions of Russian versification—he was as little as any of his predecessors. Verse-making was regarded as child's-play, unworthy of his position and age, and he expressly repudiated the imputation, as if such boyish performances somehow infringed the time intended for more important and essential matters. He was, and remained, a *dilettante*, in whom the most noticeable thing remains his decided inclination, so alien to Peter's spirit, for things French. He is the precursor of the tendency which came to characterise Russian society, and which, under Peter's

daughter, came to the fore out of purely political reasons, hatred and opposition to Biron and his Anna, to Ostermann and Münnich.

More versatile and agile was the tirelessly active Governor of Astrakhan, eager to learn and to read, Tatíshchev, a disciple of Peter's school, fighting fiercely against any restriction of the autocracy, whether planned by the magnates or the clergy, and all the more emphatically insisting on the advantages and necessity of knowledge, as in a special "Dialogue on the Benefit of the Sciences," composed in 1733 and first published in 1887; for his works remained wholly unknown to his contemporaries. The most comprehensive dealt with Russian history, a collection of native chronicles and foreign reports, based on the broadest reading, with a critical tendency, sharply attacking the clergy, in whose interest he said it lay to keep the people in their stupidity. In this way author and work came into disrepute, and not until under Catherine II. could the latter be printed. The comrade of Prokopóvich in mind and aspirations, whom he exceptionally honoured, he set forth his ideals in most detail in his "Testamentary Injunctions to his Son" (1734, printed in 1773, without the additions of the then issuer, 1885), which deal with education in general, the choice of a profession, and marriage. He is the advocate of a strictly utilitarian morality; health and money are the things most worth striving for. Suspicious prudence is especially inculcated, while at the same time the claims of unceasing labour are urged. In comparison with the peasant, he is the judicious master-cultivator, who, in a just appreciation of his own interest, spares the working power of his men. Even his championing of religious interests seems to be the outcome of similar calculation. With him, as with the Nóvgorod Archbishop, they take the place of the police. In spite of this narrowness of sympathy, it is a frank, already half-philosophically schooled mind that speaks in his writings. As with Peter, the practical preponderates, as, for instance, in the definition of Sciences and Art—he still translates "music" by "juggling," and places it on a level with tumbling and dancing. But he knows Bayle already, shares his scepticism; he draws argu-

ments from Chr. Wolff and Walch, and is familiar with Bacon, Descartes, and Puffendorf. We learn through him that, albeit only in manuscript, the works of Machiavelli, Hobbes, Locke, Boccalini and others were already forthcoming in Russian translations; he regards them as "unprofitable," and certainly they went too far for the rationalist. Like Peter, he had no comprehension for polite literature.

The first writer and theorist by inclination and profession, unfortunately without talent or taste, is Trediakovsky. Thirst for knowledge drove the poor priest's son from distant Astrakhan to Moscow, and from there the beacon of Paris attracted him so powerfully that he made the journey under the greatest privations, often on foot. The French bewitched him, and all the days of his toilsome life he was to labour for the dissemination—*i.e.*, the transplanting—of French literature and its censor, Boileau, to Russia, to purify the language, to loose versification from the state of syllabic metre and rehabilitate it according to the tonic requirements of the language and the instructive example of the popular ballad. Lastly, he translated and imitated so that all categories of polite literature, odes, and tragedies and the rest might at length be represented in Russian. Constantly battling with his own needs and the boundless rudeness of the age, he still carried out this programme. Like good fortune, the Muses persistently avoided him; but however often he may have made a mistake in the choice of subject and form, and however little thanks he got for his labours, he demonstrated to his countrymen, ever particularly indisposed to work, what may be accomplished by sheer devoted zeal and by unremitted and systematic toil.

Even Kantemir endeavoured to take up a definite position towards the language question. He separated the popular language—from which the needs of rhyming made him borrow one word and another—from the Russian; the "Slovenic" forms seemed to him already impossible, while his vocabulary unconsciously tried back to that source. Trediakovsky was the first deliberately to set himself against the "Slovenic" or Church Slavonic, although he himself had

once written it, nay, spoken it, for which he begged the pardon of everybody before whom, in his Slovenic block-headedness, he had wished to appear as a special artist in speech. Now, the "deep-mouthed Slovenic" sounded harsh to his ears; he found it obscure also, and, above all, unsuitable for the treatment of secular subjects; and so he expressly chose the "Voyage à l'Île d'Amour où la Clef des Cœurs" of 1713 and translated it in 1730. This made him known, and procured him the post of translator and, in the end, of Professor of Latin and Slavonic eloquence, at the Academy. In doing so he made use of the most ordinary language, "such as we speak to one another." The fundamental idea was, as with Trediakovsky, always correct; the defects became apparent only in the execution; notably the most clumsy compounds disfigured the flow of speech; just as in the promotion of tonic versification he first cleared the way for others more gifted. Many of his projects, as in his advocacy of a more phonetic orthography, did not meet even with the consideration they deserved, and to be sure he himself was often not in a position to make the proper results ensue. That, in an age when people looked down contemptuously on everything popular, he ventured to appeal precisely to the rhythm of popular poetry and play it off against the insufferable Kiev model, cannot be estimated sufficiently highly.

With similar deliberation and consciousness, he came forward as the first populariser of æsthetic conceptions. He prefaced his own attempts at "Pindaric" odes and antique tragedies and pseudo-classical epics with the necessary theoretical expositions as to Ode, Tragedy, Comedy, and Epic, and thus made the Russian reader for the first time acquainted with them, drawing his wisdom from the French. The examples, it must be owned, that he himself supplied were mightily bad; the most shocking was his wearisome "Telemachiad," the rendering in hexameters of the didactic novel. In fine, Trediakovsky remains only a translator who often did not venture to exhibit specimens of his own. In comedy, seeing that it requires twice as much wit as a tragedy, he contented himself with translating the "Eunuchus" in

verse, of course eliminating all indecencies. He had been guilty of a tragedy on his own account, a "Deidamia." Recognising that his powers were inadequate to original creation, he exalted the translator's art to the skies.

It is an interesting fact that in his groping attempts to justify, *e.g.*, his choice of the trochee in place of the iambus of others, he could appeal to the example of the Southern Slav literature of Ragusa; foreign translations or forgeries first supplied later writers with such information. To the charges of want of originality and incapacity—even in prosaic language which swarmed with Gallicisms, Polonisms, and Slavisms, although he had an appointment "to purify the Russian language, writing in verses and not in verses"—were added charges of want of decent feeling—unfortunately, not unfounded; the panegyrics which he had to supply officially made him the target of malevolent scorn—they wrote parodies on the unfortunate man even at the end of the century, Nikólev to wit, so undeservedly did they depreciate his real merits.

Amongst his fiercest opponents was numbered Sumarókov; he ventured to do what Trediakóvsky could not dream of, to create the original Russian models for every species of literature, and thus at one move to raise his native literature to the height occupied by the French, for others were not worth considering. The funniest thing in this undertaking was that Sumarókov himself remained convinced that he had attained this object for all time. Only from the novel he kept his hand aloof, because the authoritative æsthetic judges, Aristotle, Horace, and Boileau, did not recognise this bastard species; in the epic manner he also made no attempt, but in return represented in his own person the Russian Racine, Molière, Boileau, and La Fontaine. If, as is reasonable, we only admit Trediakóvsky to have been a translator and a theorist, then Sumarókov is the first maker of *belles lettres*; yet we can disregard his fables, satires, and epigrams, his eclogues and epistles, his elegies and odes, for after all his great merit remains in his having put real life into the Russian stage.

That stage had since the death of Peter's sister received no further patronage; even though Peter during his second journey abroad had taken a trifle more interest in the theatre, and sent for a fresh German troupe, and at the religious schools (in Moscow) mysteries and dramas were performed, the matter seemed likely to be at rest for ever. But things became different when Court troupes were got together for the wearisome and always wearied Anna, and later Elizabeth, who loved distraction. They were foreign of course, German (the Neubers) and Italian for Anna, Italian and French for Elizabeth; the ordinary public contented itself with German marionettes, which depicted the Fall or Don Juan. A merchant's son from Yaroslávl, named Vólkov, saw some performances of the kind, and his keen interest in Art led him to imitate them; with the aid of his brother and others who played women's parts as well he performed at Yaroslavl old pieces which met with approval. There was, however, no extensive repertoire; to have created such is precisely the merit of Sumarókov.

Fondness for literary occupation and knowledge of French literature he brought with him from the Knights' Academy, or Cadets' Institution, of course for nobles, lately (1732) set on foot after the Berlin model and endowed with a more varied and modern scheme of education: the alumni declaimed odes before the Tsaritsas and performed pieces. The ambitious A.D.C., eventually brigadier, threw himself into dramatic composition, beginning with his Hamlet, of which he proudly maintained that only the end of the Third Act was Shakespeare's, and soon followed this with tragedies from Russian history and comedies from Russian life, for more than twenty years driving the wain of Thespis as director and manager, as well as author. For after the Yaroslavl troupe of amateurs had performed before the Tsaritsa its "Khórev" they proceeded at length (1756) to erect a Russian theatre at St. Petersburg, which was soon followed by one at Moscow. With this began Sumarókov's time of suffering, for the means which flowed freely for foreign stages were refused to the "private" Russian one. The troubles

ended with the dismissal of the director, who then (1761) proceeded to Moscow, where fresh disappointments, on the part of the public as well, were not spared him. Catherine's favour soothed for a time his moral and financial sufferings, yet none the less the evening of his life was embittered and saddened. When he died destitute the grateful actors at any rate defrayed the expenses of his funeral.

In doing so they discharged a real debt, for he had helped the Russian theatre over its most difficult early stages. Recognition is due at the same time to the talented tragedian Dmitriévsky, the fellow-worker of Volkov, who was sent for further training to Garrick and to Paris. In his tragedies from "Khorev" and "Trúvor" to "Semíra" and "The False Demetrius" (1748–1771) not even the names of the characters were Russian, while their historical value was exactly equal to that of "Koloander and Leonilda," or "Dionea, the Princess of Negropont," well-known novels of the day; but the eighteenth century had no historic sense and troubled itself least of all at the theatre about correct mounting. It sought to have its feelings moved, and that was guaranteed by the long and passionate tirades of the poet. Their importance must not be estimated too low. Even though those novels were devoid of taste and ill-conceived, yet they helped by their sentimentality or gallantry to loosen the hard crust of the non-morality of a "Domostroỳ." Sumarókov's tirades about Honour, Patriotism, Sense of Justice, Self-sacrificing Fidelity, and Manliness shook even far more energetically the fetters of apathy and indolence. Declaimed vehemently, they misled the spectator in whose ears sounded for the first time from the Russian stage human, nay, heroic, feeling and thought; he did not see the hollowness of the characters presented from one side only, the strict conventionality of the wholly banal treatment, and the absolute incompatibility with all historical reality. The theatre performed a moral function, refined and elevated; its unbearably shrill phrase tickled the ears of the simple listeners: to his countrymen Sumarókov was really and truly Corneille, Racine, and Voltaire.

Far weaker was the stimulus that his comedies afforded; for one thing he contented himself with much too rough methods and rough jests, for here the ignoring of reality was all the more keenly felt where folks saw too clearly that the treatment and situations were borrowed. Above all, the subjects of his dramas and of his didactic satires, were too insignificant, petty officials, clerks, "Nettleseed," with their swindling and venality, the fashionable fops with their French jargon in the dialogue, and the pedantries of Trissotinius, *i.e.*, Trediakóvsky, would not hold water long. Here there were no swelling tirades which caused the obvious defects to be overlooked. Greater value attached to his smaller productions, fables and the like, but the stilted rhetoric of his dramas, their false pathos, which, in the ears of the next generation, already ranked as ridiculous exaggeration, inviting parody, the stiffness and artificiality of the language, which at times made one laugh instead of being touched, the strict observance of pseudo-classical rules, that of the Unities for instance, all raised opposition to *Comédie larmoyante*. Such childish complaints Literature was bound to pass through: and did the next successors of Sumarókov in any way show themselves his superiors? His subsequent deposition was in any case less just than the exaggerated praises of his contemporaries. Sumarókov was at the same time the first poet who thought only of his "rhymes," and placed them above everything in the world, as his opponent unjustly reproached him with doing. This opponent and rival, everything else maybe, but no poet, was Lomonósov, the supposed Malherbe and Pindar of the Russians; the conferring of such titles remained the fashion for a long while.

Side by side with Peter the Great and Theophan Prokopóvich we may indisputably rank as the third intellectual hero of this century Michael Lomonósov, while the fourth was Radíshchev, though the exploits of none of them fell within the sphere of elegant literature. Lomonósov represented for the first time the power of the mind and of knowledge upon a barbarous, servile, and materialistic society: though not exempt from their defects, the poor peasant's son

knew how to assert the rights of Knowledge as against it. He called into existence Science with better results than the Trediakóvskys and Sumarókovs did Letters. He was a sort of universal genius: metallurgist, geologist, chemist, electrician, astronomer, political economist, statistician, geographer, historian, philologist, æsthete, and poet; the day of specialising had not yet come for Russia; he stood in place of an academy and a university, technical institutes, and chemical laboratories. Only ardent patriotism had the power to obscure his usually keen insight and make him unjust and narrow-souled, which indeed, the conditions of that day explain and excuse. For Lomonósov was fighting deliberately against the monopolies and privileges of the aliens: he dreaded from them intentional and obstinate harassing and handicapping of the Russians and their own learned progeny, and his only shortcoming was that he fought for a good cause with methods that were not above objection, that in his impetuous temperament he did not keep within bounds, and that he furnished his opponents with the handiest weapons against himself. After an education such as was only possible in cultureless Russia, among privations which only the primitive strength of the Russian peasant could surmount, he became the pupil of German learning: this pupil of the Germans, whose pedantry actually passed into his blood, yet was capable of becoming their bitterest opponent; nevertheless, this most troublesome fellow did the greatest credit to his teachers, such as Chr. Wolff at Marburg, and Henckel at Freiburg. But the Deputy, later Professor of the Academy, was not allowed to stick to his Natural Sciences only: he had on State occasions to figure as official orator. The speeches he then made, resembling those of our orators, and his essays, are his most brilliant performances, not only for style but for ideas, *e.g.*, that on the position of knowledge and religion in a country where the Copernican system can only be introduced by roundabout ways; on phenomena of the air, where he advocated the right of scientific inquiry; on the advantage of chemistry, where he made science raise the gorgeous palace of human welfare; and on the origin of light, where he represented the

probing of Nature as a sacred duty. The official orator must straightway become panegyrist, and had to supply odes at State festivals and other occasions: had he not first made a name for himself as composer, translator, and adapter of odes? We should, indeed, gladly do without them; for even the best of them, those namely in which not Elizabeth, Peter III., and Catherine II., but the omnipotence of God, and the wonders of Nature, and the Northern Lights, are celebrated, produce on us the impression of extracts from the said speeches and essays. To be sure, even here in places great talent breaks through; felicitous ideas and imposing pictures rise far above the rhymings of a Trediakóvsky or a Sumarókov—the latter, indeed, gave up playing the Pindar without reserve in favour of his rival, and himself only wrote "foolish odes," *i.e.*, parodies. Especially striking was the language employed.

Of the writers of the eighteenth century none reflected so much on the language or had so great, if not always salutary, an influence upon it as Lomonósov. This wretched question went on dragging even into the nineteenth century. It was first solved by Karamzín, not by means of regulations or grammars, or hints on style, but by his brilliant and living example. This Lomonósov did not recognise, but remained convinced that the complaint could be remedied straight away by doctoring at it and writing prescriptions. It had, however, entered on an acute stage. You might regard as formally excluded the "Slovenci," the Church language with its Greek order of the words, its Greek particles, and its endless Greek compound words; so too the language of society and of the Chanceries, with their huge mass of foreign terms, which Peter without selection and arbitrarily had flung into public intercourse. They may be seen to this day, *e.g.*, on the sign of the "parik-makher" (perruque-maker); and fresh ones keep being added, from "Voksál" (Vauxhall) to "Galstukh" (Halstuch), and "Butterbrot." Lastly, the language of the people, which alone was genuinely Russian. Trediakóvsky and Sumarókov were in the best path, though even they were always being led away by the exigencies of rhyme or metre into hideous "Slovenisms" out of sheer convenience (*e.g.*,

"mia" for "meniá.") Lomonósov, on the other hand, led the Russian language into by-paths; he confused respect for Holy Writ with that for the not holy Church language—the Slavo-Greek mongrel: instead of urgently dissuading the aspiring author from reading Church literature for the sake of the language, which, according to Lomonósov's own confession, was frequently unintelligible, he urged him to it, and thus only spoiled his "shtil." He introduced the grotesque pedantry of the three "shtils," the high for epic, odes, and ornate orations, the middle for drama, epistles, elegies, and the description of noteworthy matters, and the low for comedy, songs, epigrams, and simple descriptions; the varying admixture of Slovenisms and Russicisms, as of coffee-berries or tobacco leaves of various qualities, determined the gradation of the "shtil." And they were people who believed this and imitated it. Fortunately, Lomonósov's language was far superior to his theory: in spite of the superabundance of Slovenisms it remains choice and yet vigorous, pathetic, in places not without real elevation, pure and smooth, without sinking into the commonplace or the trivial. How familiar he was in other respects with the nature and life of the language was proved by his "Russian Grammar" (1755), which, during half a century, enjoyed unquestioned authority, though even here the compiling of certain directions could not be managed quite without pedantry, from which the Russian orthography suffers to this day, yet on the whole this Grammar could bear comparison with the best of the century in Europe.

His merits are based therefore on the awakening of an original and scientific spirit, his principle, even if not so formulated, being "Knowledge is Power"; on his championship of the right of investigation, his untiring combating of "the enemies of Russian knowledge," and his promotion of schools. True, he does not succeed in establishing a University at St. Petersburg independent of the Academy, but he furthered the founding of the first and still most important Russian University at Moscow, which indeed had at first to be equipped with foreign scholars, but soon attracted capable Russians, even if they had not among them the "native

Platos and keen-witted Newtons," that Lomonósov had prophesied with the greatest certainty. Thus as far as lay in his power he carried on the work of Peter the Great, and ranks as his last and ardent admirer. He never tired of interpolating everywhere the praise of him who "raised with himself to the sky Russia that was trampled down by barbarism."

With far greater justice than the self-complacent Sumaró-kov, whose head a few flattering phrases from foreigners completely turned, Lomonósov could declare of himself that "by his odes, orations, chemistry, physics, and history, he did honour to his country." This pride distinguishes him to his advantage; he told his patron in so many words that he would not let himself be made a fool of even by God, let alone a ruler of this world. This manly dignity, so unheard of in Russia, and based, not on birth or rank, but on the conviction of his own worth, deserted him only in his odes. For this, however, responsibility rests with the age, which could not take seriously any imaginative work whatever, which regarded them only as ornament and pastime, as "fruits and dessert at a dainty meal," which understood only poetry written to order, to-day for Peter III. and to-morrow with the same pen for the woman that had usurped his throne. These cold, polished, forcedly high-flown odes, which of themselves incited to parody as his ode from Job was parodied—

> "O thou who in thy misery dost vainly
> Make moan about thy duty, officer"—

flaunted it none the less for half a century in literature. It was easier certainly to make one's own the weaknesses of the man than his temperament and knowledge. His remaining poetical productions, tragedies, an epic about the great Tsar, and so on, did not even impose on his contemporaries; he had to remain anonymous, not always successfully, in regard to his best efforts, invectives and epigrams.

Thus the crop for which Peter had tilled the soil came up but slowly. He could drill armies in the European fashion and stamp fleets out of the surface of the sea and gain with

them the battles of Poltáva and the Aland Islands; the annals of the mind and of literature had until far into the century nothing remotely similar to record. But even here the numbing blight of Asiatic immobility had been exorcised, and Russia was to be led forward ever more rapidly out of spiritual darkness to the light.

CHAPTER IV

CATHERINE II. AND HER TIME

The personality of the dilettante Empress, her comedies—Two literary currents, the French with pure reason (von Vizin, satires and fables), the German with mystical and sentimental trends — The Freemasons: Nóvikov, Radíshchev, Karamzín — Complete change of spirit: persecution of all liberal thought.

THE intervention of Russia in European quarrels and its political and military successes had awakened a new patriotism. Men were proud of being Russians, even if as yet far removed from the later claim to universal dominion. This being so, the national ambition demanded that it should keep pace with this Europe on mental and literary ground as well, and possess its own Racines, Molières, Pindars, and the like. Nay, they envied the West its Pamelas and Heloises and created a "Russian Pamela or History of the Virtuous Peasant Girl Maria," a novel of 1789, and accounted for this and the title by the desire "to show him who puts other countries before his own that the latter possesses heroes of virtue worthy of honour and admiration, and, if such heroes are so loudly belauded in England or France, it is because they are much rarer there than in uncorrupted Russia." It was out of a like patriotism that Komaróv wrote the Life of the arch-rascal and Moscow robber Vánka Kaín in 1775 in order to furnish the proof that the Russian Cartouche could put the French to the right-about. One may find this patriotism very simple-minded; one may reprobate the fact

that they contented themselves with the mere semblance, with the name instead of the thing: what was important was that they set such high goals before them at all. In order to attain them—since in Russia every change, and so a literary one as well, comes about from above and by command—the guardianship of the Russian Muses also was entrusted to the Throne and literature included in the programme of government. The favourite daughter of the great Tsar, on whom every one in Russia, excepting of course the foreigners, had based the wildest hopes, not least among them Lomonósov himself, had failed them entirely; to surpass all expectations was reserved for a German Princess who had become French by her education, something like Frederick the Great. Plato's wish was fulfilled, and an enlightened philosopher ascended the Northern throne; and not only so but before all a lover of letters, who could not see a piece of blank paper without wanting to scribble something on it, to whom literary effort caused not only spiritual but physical relief. Literature was now to be set free for ever from her menial Cinderella's part and called to take part in the work of moral and mental regeneration. And yet, promising as was the shape that things took at first, this intoxication was followed by speedy sobriety and at last by the inevitable crop-sickness. By the cradle of the Government stood Voltaire "the teacher" and Montesquieu, Diderot, and Beccaria; but the graceful and harmless flirtation of the philosophers resulted in the bloodhound Sheshkovsky, who habitually began his examinations of "political" culprits, of whatever rank, with a blow on the chin such that the teeth cracked or flew out. The principles which in 1768 the Empress herself had advocated cost the luckless champion who still maintained them in 1792 his head.

The spectacle was not unique in Russian history; her beloved grandson was once more to exhibit it and her great-grandson repeat it. Vain and easily influenced like a woman, suspicious and mistrustful like an upstart into power who feels no firm ground beneath his feet, jealous of her own power like a true autocrat, Catherine was bound to become vacillating and uncertain in her plans of emancipation, to

prefer to obtain external successes at the sacrifice of internal, and to carry on the less dangerous but all the more glorious struggle against the hereditary enemies, Turks and Swedes, to taking up that with misery at home; the Tauric decorations which Potëmkin had erected for her crimson progress might be taken as symbolical of her whole reign. With her everything was make-believe—religion, nationality, philosophy, humanity; all that was genuine were her boundless love of power, her vanity and dilettantism—in contradistinction to Peter; what he cared for was the thing, she the appearance of it. Hence the brilliant foreign policy, the substantial acquisitions of power which as a skilful diplomat she was amply capable of bringing about, the dogged energy with which she pursued these objects, which to be sure already lay within the traditional trend of the Russian policy of expansion. Hence at home the ruin of the finances, the misery of the people decimated by famines and pestilence, and the enslaving of fresh millions who hitherto had not tasted the benefits of serfdom.

Her adroit, witty, and often bantering correspondence with Frederick and Joseph II., with Grimm and the philosophers; her brilliant offers and extravagant generosity to Diderot and other Frenchmen; her care that no unfavourable opinion of Russia should remain unrefuted abroad; the dazzling outward splendour, such as the gilding of the Palace towers, which cost millions (Peter would have flogged with his own hands whoever had merely laid such a project before him, while Catherine executed it out of hand); her most high-sounding phrases, doubly impressive as coming from the mouth of an absolute ruler who has the power to make them reality and yet at the slightest obstacle calmly repudiates them—all this characterises equally the acts and omissions of this unparalleled actress on life's stage, who for all her brilliant gifts and the intoxication of power was yet at bottom a cool, sober, and cautiously moving ruler. To complete the splendour of her rule she needed a Literature of her own as well; the highly-paid adulations of the encyclopædists, the thickly sugared flatteries of the mocker of Sanssouci, the pompous titles or

native sycophancy could not satisfy her who combined Augustus and Mæcenas in one. Hence the exceptional forcing, as in a hothouse, of Literature, nay, of the Sciences in general, with which were far from being coupled respect for the truth, regard for free opinion, or care for the unpretentious but indispensable, particularly elementary education. The teaching of the people, so dreadfully behindhand—or rather simply non-existent (any other would, by the by, have been unsuited to serfs)—was not placed on a new basis under Catherine; there were indeed not wanting higher special efforts —*e.g.*, the Smólny Institution for girls of gentle blood; but otherwise everything remained as it was—*i.e.*, with the Moscow University still the only one in the vast empire; with a total lack of intermediate schools; with the necessity of bare home instruction imparted by the most insufficient means. On one occasion a Finn taught his language as French; discharged coachmen and the like became "governors" to the young nobility; even convicts were employed as teachers. And yet in spite of all defects what a gigantic contrast with the pursuit of fashion and pleasure by her predecessor on the throne, half Odalisque, half idiot! What expenditure of mental incitement on the part of this Empress, thinker, philosopher, and philanthropist, gifted with astonishing nerve-power, untiringly active, most temperate, yet delighting in life and gaiety! For in spite of the mournful end of her reign, in spite of the putting forward of the outward and showy side, in spite of all disappointments and bad experiences, much was accomplished under Catherine that was lasting and splendid.

The "Semiramis of the North"—such indeed, since she treated Peter III. as according to the legend her namesake did Ninus—was a highly gifted being, with an unbiassed intellect of many-sided culture, and a strong character of indomitable will, far superior to all those about her. Like Peter the Great or his Prokopóvich, she was unique not only in Russia or in the eighteenth century. The "Mother of her Country" differed from Peter in this respect, that she not only executed acts of state but also wrote of them. This quite special performance of the Empress is the most attractive chapter

in the Russian literary history of the eighteenth century, not as if the Empress had been as gifted a writer as she was a diplomat, though she was not without cleverness, but because of the part which the "enlightened despot" assigned to literature, because of the trials she put upon it, because of the importance of that literature to life. How small in other cases is the influence of literature on life! All the social novels of the century, for instance, might as well be addressed to the winds. When Catherine, on the other hand, in her comedies warns, threatens, or makes allusions, you may be sure she is not talking in the air, that her words will soon be transformed into very perceptible action. Her comedies against the Freemasons are not merely the comical sallies of a reformer à la Nicolai at Berlin, but also the dull rolling of a storm which will soon break over the heads of the unfortunates; they proclaim the approach of the examining judge; behind the mere words stands genuine and boundless power. If only because this literature of hers is always concerned with Russia, it claims higher interest than Frederick's, for instance, which favours the foreign and the cosmopolitan. Naturally it is imbued with the conviction of the century that the intervention of the individual powerfully influences ages and peoples, as if the most far-reaching changes could with a little energy be effected in a very short time. And yet the Empress, to whom all pedantry was an abomination, was not particularly in earnest about her literature.

The first, almost youthful enthusiasm which speaks to us out of the translation of Marmontel's "Belisaire" and her autograph version of the "Instructions" or "Nakàz" to the Commission called together to discuss a new Code, "Ulozhénie," after the old title of Tsar Alexis's day, was only transitory. It was a spectacle for the gods: on the Volga "Northern bears" growing enthusiastic over a book which preaches tolerance, the duties of a ruler, contempt for absolutism, and the rule of a clique, and lastly freedom of conscience and thought: they divide among themselves the chapters of the "novel," Chapter IX, about the ruler, falling to the Empress, and dedicate to the enlightened

Bishop of Tver, Gabriel, a book which the Sorbonne condemned and against which the Archbishop of Paris directed a Pastoral Letter! Even the Instructions, written for the most part in French, were borrowed, for almost two-thirds of its 526 paragraphs come from Montesquieu and Beccaria: they were not the official programme according to which people were to act: they only threw light on the principles, and these proved so liberal that the Empress saw at once that they might involve her in conflicts which might become dangerous to her as a usurper of the throne. What was to be accomplished with humane notions where the States in their selfishness clamoured not for the abolition but the extension of serfdom? The whole matter ended in smoke, leaving behind only the "Nakàz," so humane and liberal that the Empress had her own work confiscated. It was withdrawn from free circulation that it might not cause harm and turn people's heads.

From these high-flying plans the Empress now drew back to a far more modest position. After the nation through its deputed representatives had just been called to express its approval of the socio-political, juridical, and administrative reforms, all these matters are here withdrawn from the sphere of public opinion; the "enlightened despot" reserves to herself the exclusive right to decide on the matter, relieves the public of the trouble of thinking, and takes to moral sermonising. Catherine becomes a contributor to the moral and satirical weekly magazines and joins the writers of comedy.

She was not the first to call this kind of writing into existence. The historian Müller, at the instance of the Academy, and Sumarókov in his own name, followed by others between 1755 and 1764, had begun to issue monthly or weekly publications, which, where they did not make contributions to Russian History, imitated the English and the Germans, Addison and the rest. After the well-meant attempt of the "Nakàz" and the "Bursting of Soap Bubbles" the moral homily was adopted; the Empress's Secretary, Kozitsky, issued the weekly, *All Sorts and Sundries* (*Vsyákaia*) in 1769. In this the Empress took part; it evoked a small flood

of such weeklies, often most short-lived, which lasted till 1774. The most solid were Nóvikov's, *The Drone*, and then *The Painter*. The subjects of these satirists were the usual human themes localised to Russian soil—the fight against ignorance, against fashionable follies, extravagance, idleness, vanity, and so on, all matters of course and commonplaces, often simply translated from the English. There was little that was specially Russian, such as the "Ten Commandments for a Russian Official" in *All Sorts*, amongst them "Thou shalt comb thyself every day," or the story of the Russian sucking-pig that came back from travelling abroad a complete pig, or the arrival at Kronstadt of a ship from Bordeaux with four and twenty cavaliers escaped from the Bastille and branded with the lilies, and now offering as instructors of youth. However it soon turned out that even such "moral curtain lectures" were not to the advantage of "enlightened despotism"; for as compared with the harmless satire of *All Sorts*, the grandmother of this literary family, the rascals of grandchildren took far more liberty to themselves, and soon shook the "pillars" of society. *The Painter*, for instance, issued portions of an account of a journey in which the most piteous lament was raised as to the less than human condition of the peasants and the atrocities of their tyrants. And in other ways, too, Catherine found that the colours were laid on too darkly. Where in *All Sorts* she spoke only of the foibles of men and urged consideration, the others spoke of crimes and vices which ought to be exterminated, and accused *All Sorts* of having lost its wits in its old age. Thus these illusions, too, were broken; the magazines came to a final end in 1774; later attempts to revive them produced no proper results.

These disillusionments were spared the Imperial writer of comedies. Catherine's "Theatre" comprised a goodly number of Russian comedies in prose, of French *proverbes*, of Russian dramatic chronicles, operas, and musical plays. The latest edition of Pypin in five volumes (1901–3) contains eleven hitherto unknown pieces, yet some are still wanting whose titles have come down to us. The pieces are not hers in equal measure—it was impossible to her to write verses,

hence the librettos of the operas, &c., are the work of Khrapovitsky, the Secretary who followed Kozitsky; besides this, the fair copies which she had made by Yelágin, Khrapovitsky, and others differ quite considerably from those she wrote herself. Catherine, be it known, never gained full command either of pronunciation, which always betrayed the foreigner, or of writing Russian; she was constantly struggling with orthography, with the forms and with the aspects of the verb, as also with the syntax, and held her unsystematic early teaching responsible for it; her copyists not only corrected the mistakes, but improved the style generally at their discretion. Indeed, Catherine did not take all this amateur work over seriously; she was always conscious that she would never get beyond mediocrity, but rightly set up her claim that so long as better things were wanting her work was not superfluous. This authorship, such as it was, amused her. The things were thrown off in a few days, especially the plot always remained quite unsettled; it was just for such work that she kept the Princess Dáshkov, Mamónov, and the rest. An anecdote, occurrences in Court society, or types of the same excited her power of creation and then the public at once was taken up with guessing who was really meant. The pieces were played at the Court theatre, generally that of the Hermitage, and then found their way to the public stages of St. Petersburg and Moscow. The most fruitful year was 1772. After lengthy pauses the Empress always went back to this favourite pursuit, as when in 1787 she composed the comic opera called "Gorebogatýr Kosométovich" or "The Luckless Paladin, Son of the Crooked-thrower," a drastic depiction of Gustavus III. of Sweden, and ridiculing of his pompous setting forth and shameful return. The pieces written upon Princess Dáshkov have not yet been discovered. The public received the pieces with varying favour. What pleased '72 very much left '92 quite cold. The most lasting success was achieved by those directed against Cagliostro "Kalifalzherston" and the Martinists, "Martyshki" or Apes, "The Deceiver," 1785, translated into German and performed with exceptional applause at

Hamburg; "The Deceived," 1785 (translated into German 1786 as "Der Verblendete"); "The Siberian Shamán" (Sorcerer), 1786, translated in the same collection; and "Three Comedies against Sentimentality and Superstition," with a preface by Nicolai, 1788.

The Empress's polemical writings, even that against Cagliostro and the 140 grades of Freemasons, deal only with externals; the comedies even are after the old French pattern—the pair of lovers that are to be parted, the clever waiting-maid, &c.; there are no characters, only types—the hypocritical woman, the wonder-making and the growling woman, where the names act as labels, so that there is no need for any guessing. The amusement is in the caricatures; verbal play is most in favour; the humour of the situations is not fully utilised. One need only compare the immediately preceding, clumsy productions of a Sumarókov to appreciate the progress, the superiority, of these plays. The Empress endeavours to preserve local colour, and in that she succeeds better than in the working out of the plot—the weakest are the positive characters, the models of virtue and truth of all kinds, those who in each piece are made to be sensible. The Empress, in her imitation, goes beyond the French to Shakespeare ("Timon" and "The Wives of Windsor"), Sheridan, and Calderon, the rule of adaptation of that day being observed in doing so. Falstaff becomes Chólkadov, Windsor St. Petersburg, and so on. In the same way "Russian" comedies were produced.

Whoever approaches these pieces with such expectations as the brilliant, talented style of the letters to Voltaire evokes will find himself disappointed. The Empress's home-made methods were good enough for her subjects. Altogether foreign countries were differently treated. She talked much to Voltaire, Grimm, and others of her pieces, while in Russia no one, outside Court circles, knew their authorship for certain; at least it was never talked about in public. Their object was a fundamentally instructive one in the spirit of the age. *Ridendo castigat mores!* was blazoned on the curtain of the Hermitage Theatre.

The most interesting of these pieces are those launched in quick succession against Freemasonry. In the first it is still the foreign charlatan who takes advantage of native credulity; the two others concern themselves with those at home. They ridicule mostly externals, the claptrap of the receptions, the incomprehensible language, the fooling of grown-up children; but they also indicate the dangerousness of the morality which threatens to make folks at variance with society and announce removal to the country for the one, adoption of measures against the others. For Catherine sees only dupes or deceivers. Even the philanthropy of the Masons is suspicious to her; for if they pursue no subsidiary aims, such as self-enrichment at the expense of credulous and rich simpletons, why do they make such a secret about the business? Thus she represents among the magicians thorough-paced rascals and thieves, and purposely misinterprets their moral principles and the renovation of mankind. She assigns sheer curiosity or fashion as the only motive for joining, if gain and deception are not the objects.

After 1780 the Empress received a new incitement to literary activity. Her care for the education of her beloved grandsons made her not only study philosophy and pedagogy, Basedow and Locke and the rest, but elaborate instructions for their training, manuals and moral legends. On the other hand, the cultivation of the Russian language was to be provided for after the pattern of the French Academy. Thus Catherine turned her attention to learned pursuits, with Language and History. It is to her instigation that we owe the Polyglot Dictionary, the "Mithridates" of Adelung and the Dictionary of the Academy. Her own studies on old Russian history she set down in a special collection of six volumes, going as far as the invasion of the Mongols. This collaboration with the President of the Academy, Princess Dashkov, caused her to issue in 1783 a new magazine, in which she herself took a far greater share than in the *All Sorts* of 1769. Here she printed her historical Memoirs and a stray collection of drolleries, ideas, character-sketches and moral dissertations, "Fact and Meditation." The zeal of

the Empress, however, soon cooled; she was older and more irritable, and now took offence at many things. Thus the questions, certainly somewhat awkward, which von Vizin addressed to the Editors with the announcement that in case of their being accepted he would send more the Empress answered herself, but von Vizin never ventured on a continuation of such asking. One was: "Why in all ages fools, mockers, and praters had had no rank, yet now they had and that a high one?" The Empress replied: "Our forefathers were not all able to write; *this question* for that matter *is the outcome of an unguarded tongue*, such as our forefathers never knew, else they would have been able to count ten fools in old days to one of the present." The question "Why are we not ashamed of doing nothing?" seemed to her vague. "Why in an age of legislation does nobody think of distinguishing himself in that way?" "Because it is not every one's business." "Wherein does our national character consist?" "In rapid and acute comprehension, in exemplary obedience, in the root of all virtues that God has given to men" (?). No wonder that the "Sobesêdnik" (Interlocutor) did not long outlast this shock.

From the Empress's study of Russian History resulted the dramatised chronicles of Rurik, Oleg, and Igor (uncompleted), written after the Shakespearian pattern, without regard to dramatical rules; not historical dramas, but detached scenes, with Slavonic and Greek songs and dances, massed spectacles and political allusions, especially in "Oleg"—"The Russians in Constantinople as victors!"—a regular commentary on the Turkish wars and the lofty Greek aspirations of the Empress, with patriotical tirades. Other writings of hers, more interesting to the historian—her "Memoirs," in French, partly made public by Herzen; apologetic rejoinders to Chappé's "Journey to Siberia," "Antidote où Examen," &c.; and pamphlets against the Freemasons, like "Le Secret de la Société Antiabsurde"—do not come within the scope of our cognisance.

The satiric trait of the age, instead of the heroic, which perhaps the Empress might have expected as a worthy

celebration of her successes, remained its characteristic. The greatest literary value attached to the two comedies of von Vizin, "The Brigadier" and "The Minor" ("Nédorosl"). Satirists are in the habit—and this applies exactly to the satire of a Nóvikov—in deliberate disregard of the true state of affairs, to place the golden age back in the past, and prate of the splendid morals and excellences of our forefathers, blindly imitating ancient satire, which was bound to treat of a decay of manners. Vizin is more impartial; with him the fathers are worth as little as the sons. In both comedies people of the old type are brought in: the Brigadier, rough, choleric, and ignorant; his wife, of incredible narrowness; their son, an addlepate like his parents, but with a French veneer; the Councillor, with the well-known *morale* of the official, a hypocrite to boot; and his lady, madly in love with the Frenchified youth: the scenes between father and son, between the Brigadier's lady and the Councillor, who makes her a declaration of love in quotations from the Psalms, are irresistible in their effect. Still richer in midriff-shaking comicality is "The Minor." Mitrophánushka and his tutors, his examination, his mother and her foolish fondness, her brother with his taste for pigs, verge closely on caricatures, but have remained unsurpassed on the stage, in that age or since. As compared with these types of revolting coarseness of heart and mind, the moral characters are pale and indistinct; their pet contentions, moreover, are borrowed. Unhappily, von Vizin contented himself with the triumphs which the reading of these comedies before the Empress and others secured him, and followed only too exactly the alleged advice of Potemkin, "Die, or else write no more!" His tendency to venomous satire is more evident from other writings than from the two comedies. We have already referred to the "Questions" of 1783; even worse was the "Court Grammar," and while he criticised everything in Russia, he treated, in his quality of misanthrope in the making, foreign countries no more gently. His "Letters from France" often become simply denunciations, which, moreover, he borrowed from French preachers on morals. Even

here many profound observations strike us; you think you are reading the very words of Herzen, as, for instance, "If folks here" (in France) "began to live before us, we can at any rate in beginning our life give it the form we please and escape the discomforts and evils which here have taken root, *nous commençons et ils finissent.*" And, on the strength of it, people have wanted to stamp von Vizin as a Slavophile, whereas he disputes all Russian life in the past. Against this hypochondriacal glosses on French slavery and Russian freedom cannot count. To be sure, von Vizin is in other ways entirely dependent on the French; that you can see from his language. In that, too, he is on a par with his contemporaries. But it is interesting that, for the first time, in place of unconditional admiration of the foreign masters, we meet with criticism of those masters.

Others went still further; Prince Shcherbátov and Princess Dáshkov, the only Russian woman that was by half a match for the Empress in mind, cultivation, and energy (whence the frequently strained relations between the two and the definite disgrace of the Princess-President, although Catherine owed her the deepest debt of gratitude from the Palace revolution), dissatisfied with the present, with its lax morality, its extravagance, avarice, and want of honour, played off Prostakóv and Skotínin, *i.e.*, the homely morality of the ante-Petrine age, against Reform, lamenting the dreadful corruption of morals among the moderns. As reality spoke only too plainly, and the return to the ante-Petrine age and the bestial ideals of Skotínin was impossible, they regretted at least the too rapid pace at which they had receded from barbarism, and the abrupt breach with tradition, *i.e.*, barbarism. This was most plainly expressed by Shcherbátov, who in the sphere of old Russian history had done undoubted services by the publication of separate texts and also of a seven-volume history of Russia down to the Románovs, laying the foundation for the subsequent structure of Karamzin. His keen criticism remained quite inaccessible to his contemporaries. Even this one circumstance, that he dared not reveal what he thought, might have convinced the Prince that the reason for the

"decay of morals" lay not in reform, but in the fact that it was too one-sided and incomplete, that the old Asiatic spirit remained alive in modern forms and beings. To be sure, in all this Rousseau's influence played a part, the conception of the conditions of Paradise ere humanity tasted the tree of knowledge. For Shcherbátov's criticism of modern relations and men in power, the apology for the old honest men, in which infringed class privilege played a notable part—he complained bitterly of the neglect of the "old families"—mingled fully with the most modern deism and other achievements of Progress. To his ideals on the subject the Prince gave expression in his uncompleted "Journey to the Land of Ophir," *i.e.*, Russia (not printed for more than a century). From the framework of the imaginings of More and Swift and other Utopia-makers "Ophir" was removed by the fact that it bore the express features of Russia with the Petrine reform and the contrast of the two capitals, and unveiled his theory of a future State with the return to the old capital, but at the same time with puritanical strictness of morals, a religion without dogmas, altar, or priests, with open and speedy justice, and, so characteristic of a Russian, a thorough regulating of private life as well, with exceptional privileges for the higher nobility.

This criticism, wholly hidden from contemporaries—for even the Memoirs of Princess Dashkov did not see the light for half a century—and satire on the age brings us to a book whose history throws the most lurid light on the new development of things in Russia and the change that had taken place in the Empress. The playing with the ideas of the "Nakàz" of 1768 she had long given up as likely to burn her fingers, but she became still more cautious and mistrustful when the philosophic ferment of men's minds in Paris took a political form as well. She at once adopted a sharp attitude of opposition, could not find words enough to condemn the weakness of the King and his ministers and the crimes of the Chamber of Deputies. She was too wary, however, to plan an armed intervention as the Don Quixote of Reaction, but she took all the stronger measures for her realm to guard it

against this pest, on the principle which since then has remained prevalent, notably in '48, "Because it rains in Paris they put up umbrellas on the Neva." The assault of the revolutionaries on the Bastille, in which Russian aristocrats took part, she regarded as an attack and assault on autocracy and took her measures accordingly; her cadets were already translating the "Marseillaise."

The transformation had not come about suddenly; experts had long since interpreted the symptoms of it. When the artless poet Kapnist, after reading the "Nakáz," ventured on an Ode against slavery, Princess Dashkov wanted to print it and hand it to the Empress (1786), but Derzhávin dissuaded her on the ground of its "not being compatible with sound reason." Then, quite unexpectedly, there appeared at St. Petersburg, with the permission of the Chief of Police, a whole book against slavery, with an ode to Freedom and Franklin (1790).

The title, to be sure, was most innocuous, "A Journey from St. Petersburg to Moscow," in twenty-five chapters, called after the posting-stations, Chúdovo, Nóvgorod, Záitsevo, and so forth. Sterne's "Sentimental Journey" had furnished the model; only the sentimentality of the Russian was not aroused by a caged bird or a flogged ass, but by the sight of the terrible sufferings of the serfs, and relieved itself by an eloquent appeal to the heart and conscience of men. The author, Radíshchev, a very honourable and unselfish official, had in his youth been sent by the Government to the University at Leipzig, where the French, notably Helvetius, attracted him more than Gellert and Platner. Raynal's "History of the Two Indies," with its warm pleading for the rights of the negroes, made him think of the white slaves at home, and so his own book came into being. Most of his "impressions of travel" concerned the beneficent results of serfdom, much as decades later the "Diary" of Turgenev's "Sportsman" was to do; only in Radishchev's case the prudent, story-like disguise fell from him, and he went boldly at everything. Even Administration and Justice were taken into account: scenes from recruiting, *i.e.*, the

civil death of the conscripts, and from the sale of peasant families were depicted, the squire who had violated sixty peasant girls mentioned—the Empress added in the margin the name of the man concerned. A vision made Truth, the alien and unknown, appear before the laurel-crowned ruler, with his sycophants and adorers about him, and pierce the film over his eyes; he confesses his blindness and delusion. There were even pathetic imprecations: "Beware of the bread that may come from the granaries of the landowners; tears and despair rest upon it; God's curse will make such bread poison to you! Let yourselves be softened, you hard-hearted ones; break the fetters of your brethren, open the dungeon of slavery. The countryman who gives us health and life has no right to control the land which he tills, nor over that which the land produces!" But the author dreamed of no violent revolution, nor did he incite any one. His book was not intended for peasants, who would not have understood it; he addressed himself to the conscience of the masters, and awaited reformation from their awakening. "I looked about me," he says in the Dedication, "and my soul was grieved by the sufferings of mankind. I found that man's woes proceed from man himself, because he does not see things in their true light; remove the curtain from the eye of natural feeling, and you will be happy. . . . I realised that each individual is in a position to partake in the welfare of his like. . . . This thought it was that induced me to write down what follows."

That was all: a series of sentimental and pathetic words, of truthful pictures without exaggeration or distortion, a candid drawing of attention to Russia's cancer, to the curse which weighed down millions, and with it a frank condemnation of all censorship as something superfluous and harmful. If the book had been written in 1768, the Empress might have at once added it to her own "Nakàz." The only crime of the unhappy author was that he had written it twenty years too late; in other countries they punish, equally madly, too early an appearance, in Russia too tardy a one.

The police-censor raised no objections to the "Journey," but the Empress did. Radíshchev appeared to her "a rebel worse than Pugachóv," the ringleader of the peasants, who had gone near to shake her throne. In the end he is "a Martinist or something of the kind." In her comments we read: "The author is infected by the French, he seeks every possible method of lowering respect for authority and kindling the indignation of the people against their superiors." Under the hands of the terrible Sheshkóvsky the author repudiated his book; he was condemned to death, and the Senate confirmed the sentence, on the ground partly of paragraphs about the storming of fortresses and intrenchments and the gathering of fighting men against the Tsar. The sentence was reduced to banishment to Eastern Siberia, with transport in chains. Paul pardoned him, and Alexander had him reinstated, but the dread of autocracy had so sunk into his bones that when his superior threatened him in play with Siberia again, he poisoned himself at once. And most remarkable of all, this quite harmless book is still unobtainable in Russia; the editions which had been already sanctioned were destroyed, till at length, in 1890, an impression of one hundred copies was permitted. The name of the poor author was for a long time forbidden to be mentioned, even in dispraise.

In order to do justice to Radíshchev, let us remember that his dilatings in the "Journey" were not momentary promptings of disgust at the realities of Russia, such as drove others to suicide in spite of all the triumphs abroad and the jovial life at home. He always proclaimed the same, and that even with the Empress's approval and without any hesitation. Thus in 1773 he published, at the expense of the Empress, Mably's "Observations sur l'histoire de la Grèce," interpreting the phrase "despotism" as "autocracy," and calling it "a state most repugnant to human nature"; and declared, amongst other things: "Injustice in the ruler gives the people as his judge the same right over him that the Law accords him over the criminal, or an even greater one." In 1789 he published the biography of his

Leipzig friend, Ushakóv, the first biography of a Russian private person, and in it occur the keenest arraignments of the officials that oppress the people, eulogies of the proud Englishmen for their resistance to rulers, his delight that oppressors walk smitten with blindness on the verge of an abyss without dreaming they may fall; lastly, the confession with what enthusiasm the youths on their return saluted Russian soil, and how soon what they encountered there moderated their ardour. The "Journey" only formulated more sharply and systematically the old ideas and placed serfdom in the foreground. He called for absolute freedom in religious matters, even for sects, for the more notorious their doings the sooner they decay, but he was throughout a deist. He demanded love, not force, as the motive in the relations between parents and children. He demanded legality in the exercise of authority; the latter must not infringe the "Contract," else men would guard themselves against it, and escape it even by suicide, which is the last and justifiable resource (it was not by accident that in 1802 he had recourse to poison and razor).

In his vision he makes Truth tell the ruler: "If a man arises among the people who blames thine acts, know that he is the true friend without hope of reward or slavish fear: beware and venture not to punish him as a stirrer up of the masses; call him to thy side and entertain him [through Sheshkovsky?] as a stranger, for every one who blames the Tsar in his absolute rule is an alien in the land, where every one trembles before the Tsar. . . . Such stout hearts are rare, scarcely one in a hundred years appears on the field." What he said about the censorship and truth has never been surpassed in Russia: "If any man raves against printed lines, he makes us think that what is printed is true and that he is as it stands there in print. Truth is our highest divinity, and if the Almighty should change her shape and not be willing to manifest Himself in her, our faces would be turned away from Him." "The censorship and Court lies make the knowledge of the truth impossible." "The censorship is made the nurse of reason, of fancy, of all that is great and noble, but where

there are nurses there are children who cannot walk by themselves and will never learn to." Then come his laments over serfdom: "Savage beasts, insatiable blood-suckers, what do we leave the peasant? What we cannot take from him, the air. On the one hand almost absolute power, on the other defenceless weakness, for with regard to the peasant the Lord is lawgiver, judge, executor of justice, and accuser. That is the lot of one bound in fetters, the lot of one confined in a stinking dungeon, the lot of an ox in pound."

For the first time Nóvikov's judgment on Russian literature was refuted. In his *Painter* he had made a retired official make a mock of the satirist: "Why do you pour out of the empty into the void? You are like my wife's lapdog which barks at everybody and bites nobody, and that means barking to the wind; methinks if you bark you should bite, and that so as to hurt, but for that there are other dogs; lap-dogs are allowed to bark, but no one is afraid of them. So with you, you write only what matters not." Nóvikov was right, and that not only about the satire of the century, but Radíshchev's "Journey" alone of its kind did not "bark to the wind." And if like Galileo he had to submit to the Inquisition, he did not allow himself to be convinced by the arguments they had used against him. He adhered to his principles; if but one raises himself above the crowd and boldly makes his profession, others fly to his side like stones to a magnet; only it must be a real gathering of supporters, "else Huss is choked in the flames, Galileo is dragged to prison, and your friend banished to Ilimsk." But he came back from there unreformed and handed in the project the demands of which are partly unfulfilled to this day: equality of all before the law, public courts and jurymen, abolishment of the punishment of the rod and of the table of rank, freedom of conscience, and so forth. No wonder that Count Zavadovsky, his chief, spoke to him of Siberia or that he had recourse to suicide. The "foe of slavery," as Pushkin proclaimed him, his name remains immortal. In the nineteenth century another Chernyshevsky reminds us of this hero of freedom, by the bitter animosity of his persecutors.

"Barking to the wind" was now tolerated, toothless satire in the "smiling" genre, that of von Vizin, especially in the "Minor"; its kicks were only bestowed on those that long since lay on the ground, while it prostrated itself respectfully and enthusiastically before the Government, the rich uncle from America, the sage ruler who causes men to find their true happiness, with its compliments skilfully addressed to the Empress, and put in the mouth of an "old" instead of a "new thinker." The strong admixture of moral homilies which distinguishes the "Minor" from the "Brigadier," in which the virtuous folk quite disappear, secured for him at that time the applause of the crowd, but it was soon to make the audience yawn.

The same held good of tragedy; there too conflicts with the mistrustful autocracy could not fail to occur. True Nikólev's Sorena, with its tirades against tyrants, which the Governor-General of Moscow banished from the stage, the Empress caused to be played again, but Kniazhnin's tragedy "Vadím" when Princess Dashkov had printed it off (in 1793, after the death of the author), aroused the deepest displeasure; it was confiscated and the Princess dismissed in disgrace. And yet Kniazhnin had for two decades ruled the stage with precisely similar productions unhindered. He had fully entered on Sumarókov's heritage, even in the respect of lack of talent. His tragedies were either translations of Corneille or imitations, of Metastasio amongst others: the words of his "Titus"—"May Rome become my temple, its altar the hearts of the citizens," aimed directly at the Empress. Tragedy should have a moral effect; morality is more important than knowledge, we want men more than any talents. Starting from this point, Kniazhnin tricked out his heroes in the fairest virtues and made them deliver the most wonderful speeches on love of mankind, duties of the citizen, true honour, true merit, &c., a living commentary on the principles of the "Nakàz," until it turned out that such were no longer the order of the day. "Vadím," the revolt of Nóvgorod against the autocracy, the democratic speeches of his partisans, yet the glorifying of the victory of the Monarchy over the

Republic, was just as well meant as "Róslav," the eulogy of the love of country which remains untamed even in a dungeon, and as the other tragedies, and yet was regarded as tainted with French—*i.e.*, revolutionary—ways of thinking.

The drama in this way retained its moral and French—*i.e.*, pseudo-classical—character: the "original" pieces, apart from the names, resembled the translated to a hair, only that they were much worse: they held their ground mostly through the declamation of certain heroic actors like Dmitrievsky. A certain variation and democratising of the subject-matter was brought in by bourgeois comedy, which at length delivered the repertoire from destroyers and tyrants. But even this "comedy" brought about no nationalising of the stage, which continued to be dominated by translations; the original attempts of a Verévkin or a Kheráskov with their touching effects made no difference in it. Ever louder grew the cry for ousting foreign methods from the stage; but the man who proclaimed his theory most loudly, Lukín, in practice did very mediocre work, and even his theoretical demands only amounted in fact to patchwork. The public, indeed, showed itself extremely thankful for even the slightest concession to its national feeling. Accordingly it made ready its warmest reception for the first Russian opera which brought actual peasants, popular tunes, and village beauties on the stage, Ablesímov's "Miller," which retained its popularity, in spite of a somewhat doubtful realism, through decades unimpaired; it called forth imitations.

It was in comedy that this want of genuineness most readily made itself felt. Von Vizin took only his negative figures from life, and his positive from the "Nakàz": others contented themselves with still less, like Kniazhnin, whose comedies in spite of their Russian names are French and impute impossible things to the Russian; the most successful was the "Coaching Accident" where the peasant lovers who are threatened with separation avert the catastrophe by speaking in French to their master, who is crazy on Frenchiness. The greatest success next to the "Minor" was achieved by Kapnist's "Chicaneries" ("Yábedy") but after a few performances (1798) they were

and remained most strictly tabooed. The author in dramatising his own trial had shown Russian justice *in naturalibus:* the comments on his judicial personages ran, "a thorough Judas and betrayer of the truth," or "a most thorough-paced thief," or "be you bare as the palm of the hand, yet he will skin something off you." A verse put in the Procurator's mouth was notorious :—

> "Grab, it needs no learning crabbed,
> Grab what lets itself be grabbed,
> What were hands hung on us for
> But for grabbing more and more?"

With this satirically didactic literature went hand in hand the fable, especially as Chemnitzer cultivated it. It was nothing new, for Sumarókov had written hundreds of them—to be sure often more satire than fable—and they might be accounted the most valuable of his remains; at least, they seemed so to his contemporaries. Chemnitzer only wrote a quarter as much, and even of this much is taken from La Fontaine and still more from Gellert, though much is branded as "foreign" which else might have caused trouble to the author on account of the personal reflections. In the man himself there was no guile; and it is just so that he appears in his fables—a sympathetic, honourable personality, who is in earnest about his moral, *e.g.*, the injunction in the celebrated "staircase," to begin at the top and not at the bottom with cleaning up; he knows how to shape his matter as simply, clearly, and flowingly as possible, to make the diction with its proverbial turns suit as far as possible the popular language; hence the deserved popularity of his collection of Fables (1779) which, in spite of a certain dryness—"baldness" Vyazemsky called it—ran into forty editions and was only ousted by Krylov.

The focus of all the literature hitherto discussed was formed by St. Petersburg, the Empress, and the "Nakàz"; its type was exclusively the French, in which the translations and imitations of Shakespeare could make no alteration; the tendency none but the enlightening, informing, and improving, whether it

directly preached the new maxims of the Catechism or more effectually attacked the old vices—idleness, ignorance, superstition, and hypocrisy, and the new defects—affectation, windy emptiness, fashionable folly, Gallomania, love of gambling, devising of projects, criticising the Government, and dishonesty; it was against the three last that the comedies of the Empress were especially directed—by displaying these perversions on the stage or scourging them in the satirical periodicals. But in this one tendency, exclusively French in spite of leanings towards Sterne or Gellert, and best embodied in the whole French *esprit* of the Empress, Russian mental work is no longer absorbed; Moscow held its ground beside St. Petersburg, sentimentality and mysticism beside advanced thought, the German-English influence asserted its rights beside the French, and there were even authors who quite left the province of satire and became mystics. The unquestioning worship of Voltaire and the encyclopædists Holbach and Helvetius, in which Princess Dashkov revelled; the rapid predominance of Voltairianism, with its scepticism in matters of belief, its preaching of a somewhat shallow humanity without any feeling for the political and revolutionary side—these and "freethinking" were not combated for the first time in 1789, when the Empress as good as forbade her favourite author; for Voltaire's writings could no longer be printed in a Russian version without the sanction of the clergy, while even in 1783 Rakhmáninov had taken advantage of the liberation of the printing industry to publish Voltaire in a translation at his private press. A wall against them and all frivolity and godlessness into which the French movement degenerated in minds that were not ripe for it was raised by the German-English influence.

This influence had long since had its way prepared by sojourn in Germany, as during the Seven Years' War, when Königsberg was Russian; secondly, by the Germans in Russia, especially in Moscow, from the professors at the University, such as Schwarz and Schaden, though bitterly hostile to each other, to the "storm and stresser" Lenz; by such writers as Haller, Gessner, Gellert, and Kleist, and not least by Free-

masonry. It had been transplanted to Russia by Englishmen, and had even under Elizabeth found individual adherents in the highest circles, and had even there met with opposition from the clergy; it achieved no real diffusion until the days of its worst enemy, Catherine. One might have thought that the humanitarian tendencies of unadulterated Freemasonry, the raising oneself above religious, national, and class barriers, its pursuit of truth and idealism, would have chimed in without ado with the reforming aims of the Empress. But it proved otherwise. At first Catherine left the Freemasons unmolested, but in the long run her "enlightened despotism," jealous for its unlimited authority, was bound to feel growing mistrust of a secret society which withdrew itself wholly from its control. This suspicion increased still more when Russian Freemasonry was invaded by pietistic impulses, which always seemed to Catherine "smuggish," by occult learning, magic, the search for the elixir of life and the philosopher's stone, which she regarded as simple fraud; when the Russian Freemasons became simply Rosicrucians—and even those who opposed them landed at the same point; when, moreover, political and social aims, such as those of the Illuminati, were suspected and Catherine believed she had discovered relations between the Masons and the creature she hated most, her son Paul, and, though only in matters of the Order, with other countries. Russian Freemasonry was not homogeneous; the Petersburg Masons paid most heed to externals, to fooleries about ceremonies and degrees; the more serious ones of Moscow followed various aims. And thus it came about that the rage of the Empress at last found vent on a single innocent man, so that even the "oldest cannon in her arsenal," which she brought to bear on the unhappy wight, wondered why the accomplices in the "crime" of Nóvikov escaped almost scot-free while on him fell sentence of death, mitigated to fifteen years of Schlüsselburg.

Nóvikov, already recommended to the Empress as one of the Ismailovsky regiment that carried out the Palace revolt on her behalf, and as secretary of the Law Committee of 1768, could by reason of his literary activity be only all the more

welcome to her. He was the editor of the most notable satirical weeklies that ever sallied forth to reform morality, *The Drone*—the editor, too idle for any work of his own, wished professedly only to present that of others—and *The Painter*, *i.e.*, of morals; to be sure, he went somewhat further than suited the Empress. Even in *The Drone* (1769) a correspondent warned him to hold his mirror up only to little people and leave the great alone, for Russian wit alone should suffice for satire. In *The Painter* (1773) he published a description of a journey which quite anticipated Radíshchev's book; in it were the appeals to humanity "which here, in Russian villages, is all unknown," and to the lords of the soil, "who tyrannise over men like themselves." Then comes a character picture from the village of "Wasteham," which leaves nothing wanting in the shape of horrors; in this place of tears he exclaims: "Oh, hard-hearted tyrant that wrenchest from thy peasants their daily bread and their last rest! . . . Cry and lament, poor wretches!" (He is speaking here of deserted children.) "When you are grown they will not even leave you that relief!" The Editor concluded with the assurance that he would not have ventured to offer such a highly-seasoned dish to his readers as long as we "were infected by the French nation," but now the wisdom that sits on the throne keeps watch over all kinds of truth—which did not hinder the said wisdom from placing obstacles in the way of the further publication of *The Painter*.

Nóvikov, in fact, did not fit into the French framework into which the Empress had forced literature, life, and *ton* in St. Petersburg; he had preserved his mental independence and sought the same for his countrymen. It was he who revived the chimera of "the virtues of our forefathers," which they have shamefully deserted; perhaps it was from that standpoint that he arrived at his searching examination, furthered by the Empress herself, of Russian antiquity in his "Historical Library" and other editions of texts and collective works, and to the first and most eulogistic Dictionary of Authors. He exchanged these historical interests for social and journalistic propaganda, the first of its kind in St. Petersburg; endeavoured

to combat the corruption of morals, making the French responsible for it; sharply attacked the imitators of everything foreign, and arrived at the pessimistic conclusion—"If only our lost and vanished morality could return; it is as if the old Russian rulers had foreseen that through the introduction of arts and sciences the most precious treasure of the Russians, their morality, would be irretrievably lost to them." From this dilemma between enlightenment and *morale* Nóvikov sought an issue in the striving for self-knowledge and found it in adherence to Freemasonry, especially in the Reichel lodges, which deduced everything from morality and self-knowledge. In this view he issued at St. Petersburg a moral and pietistic periodical, the *Morning Light* (*Utrenniy Svêt*), for the healing and strengthening of the mind and spirit and contending against the shallow rationalism of the age. He filled it up principally with translations from the German; the proceeds he devoted to a school for orphans, and was soon able to erect a second one.

His philanthropical and journalistic activity increased quite disproportionately when he migrated to Moscow and took over the University press offered him by the Freemason Kheráskov, the curator, and the publishing of the *Moscow News*, the number of subscribers to which, through him, rapidly increased sevenfold. A decisive influence was exercised by his acquaintance with Professor Schwarz, the Rosicrucian, the most self-sacrificing promoter of the training of the young, who took from the young their materialistic books, though without, like the later Russian Freemasons, disputing as an obscurantist the results of scientific and philosophical research; in company with other Freemasons—Lopukhín, Gamaléa, and so forth—they founded a "Society of Friends of the Sciences" to provide for the training of young men of similar turn of mind, whom they sent abroad and employed as translators to further the increasing activity of Nóvikov as a publisher. After the death of Schwarz, in 1784, the latter found himself quite at the head of the Society, now transformed into a printing company. Within a short time he decupled the circulation of books in Moscow and the provinces; he was

the first to circulate books in Russia, deep in among the schools and the people, distributing what he printed gratis. This comprised many historical and political writings, amongst others a very garbled "Life of Washington," which ended with the dictum—"Freedom banished from Europe will take refuge in America." Then followed geographical and pedagogical, religious, and pietistic works. And he was not even content with that, but created model arrangements for the wellbeing of his workmen, organised in the famine year an energetic system of aid, in which a young friend supported him with his whole fortune of over a million roubles—so great was the influence of his undertaking, which for the first time wholly freed itself from official guardianship. Although not free from Rosicrucian aberrations and pietistic attacks, Nóvikov deliberately championed the ideals of his younger friend and served the cause of enlightened religiousness, the "inner" Church, while people were accusing him of overturning the outer, or official, one, worked in behalf of the Sectaries, printed a keenly anti-Jesuitical History of that Order, which the Empress, the patroness of the Jesuits in Russia, again recorded, very much to his disadvantage, and attacked superstition and intolerance, for which the Empress declared him a fanatic.

The Empress's dread, as she did not know the source of Nóvikov's means and interpreted his philosophical conduct only as self-seeking and the befooling of ignorant contributors, grew persistently; from 1785 open intrigues were afoot. First the Clergy was mobilised against him; the Moscow Metropolitan, Platón, was to examine the several hundred publications of Nóvikov and the man himself with regard to his orthodoxy. Platón divided printed works into undoubtedly useful ones, especially having regard to the poverty of Russian literature, those he did not understand, *i.e.*, the "mystical," and those decidedly harmful, the ex-favourites of the Empress, those of the Encyclopædists. As to Nóvikov himself, he solemnly declared, "I implore the Almighty that there may be, not only in the flock entrusted to me, but throughout the world, such Christians as Nóvikov." Not only spiritual, but

temporal, weapons failed; even in 1791 Count Bezboródko, who was really charged to make a secret inquiry, could find no handle for interference, while the Empress, still further alarmed by Radíshchev's book, had already decided the ruin of Nóvikov. He was forced in 1791 to close the "Typographical Company," and in 1792 was handed over to the Inquisition of Prozorovsky and Sheshkovsky, which decided that Nóvikov's whole conduct tended to the concealment of his offence; only the "old cannon" could not define the nature of that offence, although it scented even in his quotations from Holy Writ, *i.e.*, in the numbers of the chapters and verses, the preconcerted signals of ruinous plans and criminal teaching. Nóvikov was arrested as the most dangerous of State criminals and carried off to Schlüsselburg, condemned, and so severely handled in the prison itself that he—fruitlessly—implored the clemency of the Empress. When Paul ascended the throne he at once set the innocent man free; he is said to have begged him on his knees to forgive the crime that the Empress had committed against him. But the "question" and imprisonment had entirely broken the martyr; he vegetated for years in strict seclusion, supporting the destitute, such as the widow of Schwarz and Gamaléa. The only crime of which he was convicted was the printing of Masonic writings, though Freemasonry as such was not forbidden; his real offence lay in his uncontrolled, energetic, philanthropic exertions and in his wide moral influence, the first of its kind in Russia; this the autocracy could not brook beside itself. Added to this was the panic dread of the Revolution, to which fell victims other Masons who came back from abroad its whole-hearted opponents. Masonic literature in Russia, which flourished during two periods (1775–92 and 1806–20), is, we may mention here, rich in quantity, but not in importance, being almost exclusively translations of foreign works from St. Martin and Arndt's "True Christianity" to Eckarthausend and Jung-Stilling.

More interesting than these or even the original writings of a Yelágin the St. Petersburg Grand Master, or a Turgénev,

who demonstrated that only a Freemason can come up to the ideal of a good citizen, are the men themselves; foremost among them a Lopukhín—Peter the Great's first wife had been a Lopukhín. The European contents himself only too often with theory and abstraction, while he steers his ship of life into quite other channels; the Russian takes the theory in earnest and puts it into action. So it was with Lopukhín, who in spite of his Freemasonry and mysticism often reminds one so vividly of Tolstoy, or even anticipates him. We may find his contending with Holbach, whom he had a little before admired and translated, simple-minded; or we may have great difficulty in understanding his "Spiritual Knight, or the Searcher after Truth," and his "Ground Plans of the Inner Church, of the One Way of Truth and the Various Ways of Error and Perdition" (both often printed in foreign languages) because of the Masonic or rather mystical terminology. His drama "The Triumph of Justice and Virtue, or the Upright Judge" (1798), may be quite undramatical—what impresses us is the Judge and Senator Lopukhín, who always took the side of the accused, for which his colleagues called him a martinet and very opinionated; who, a hundred years beforehand, came forward with the arguments and the sequence of ideas that we know from Tolstoy's "Resurrection"; who achieved humane treatment for the sect of the Dúkhobórs, the same that Tolstoy took under his protection a hundred years later in spite of the opposition of the clergy, who branded him as a heretic for it; who divided his fortune among the poor, so that the Governor-General of Moscow, that "oldest cannon," suspected him of false-coining; who never could understand how men could trouble themselves as to whether they might put sugar in their tea during Lent, yet without any feeling of misgiving commit the greatest baseness against their neighbour. Thus Lopukhín, like Tolstoy, was concerned with the true advantage of mankind, both in writing and in act, only that he lacked Tolstoy's talent for the former. And of such interesting characters Russian Freemasonry has more to show—Lopukhín's pupil,

Nevzórov, to wit, who through Catherine remained shut up for years in a madhouse, who as a man of the truth fell out with everybody and continued wretchedly poor because he gave away everything. The most notable was Labzín, to whom along with other youths Schwarz gave private lectures on Helvetius, Rousseau, and Spinoza, and converted them to religion, of which they did not know much—Holy Writ, indeed, was unknown to most and seemed only to exist for priests; the most devout were convinced that to read it could only make a layman mad. Then he became the most eager translator of Jung-Stilling, and published the "Messenger of Sion," which the Holy Synod soon forbade, but which revived when under Razumóvsky and still more Golítsyn the Freemasons acquired predominating influence in the Ministry of Education until they were for ever overthrown by the proper warders of Sion, the irreconcilable Orthodoxists. In this second phase the Masons, as opponents of the Revolution, of the audacity of human understanding, and of inquiring knowledge, acquired an unenviable reputation as obscurantists of the worst kind; But it must not therefore be forgotten what the older among them accomplished for the spread of humane and just ideas in the Russia of governmental arbitrariness and judicial injustice.

German-English influence did not exclusively result in Freemasonry and Illumination; for Literature as such another current was more fruitful, which set itself in sharp opposition to the exclusively French tendency, to pseudo-classicism as well as to rationalism, the dryness and emptiness of St. Petersburg literature, maintained the rights of the heart and the feelings against those of reason, and exchanged the thunder of Lomonósov's and Sumarókov's Odes for the "sweet" notes of Karamzín, conquered the hearts of the young, and brought about a revolution on Parnassus in matter, style, and language—nay, was to call into being the first sharp literary contrasts.

The hero of this drastic change, the first Russian man of letters whose influence was a creative force and a model for

the whole reading world, and at the same time its first favourite, was the future historiographer of the Russian State, Karamzín. Turgénev had brought him from his provincial surroundings into the circle of the Moscow Masons, where the traditions of Schwarz continued to work and where he concluded a cordial alliance with those who were like-minded (Petróv, &c.), and he was brought into the pietistic and Masonic workshop, primarily as translator of Haller and others. But he did not become a Mason, although he gratefully remembered the assistance he had enjoyed from them. He was not born to be a pietist; he was preserved from that by his *joie de vivre*, his sentimental tendency, his feeling for Nature and the love for literature which had been awakened in him in his earliest youth. It was not the French, but all the more the English and Germans, that attracted him; Young and Thomson, Richardson and Sterne, Haller and Gessner, Herder and Lavater, and Rousseau, but not Voltaire. At Moscow even when boarding with Professor Schaden, and later by Petróv and Lenz, he was initiated into this literature, at an early age translated "Emilia Galéotti" and "Julius Cæsar" (forbidden in 1794 as a dangerous book), but his enthusiasm for Shakespeare, Goethe, and Schiller was rather one acquired so as not to be behind the times. Ossian, on the other hand, genuinely affects him, for Sterne he cannot find laudatory epithets enough; and while he says nothing of Goethe and Schiller, he admires Haller, the greatest philosophical poet, the Theocritus of the Alps; Gessner, the immortal singer of the spring; Kleist, the singer of the "Messiad," which his elder comrade of the Moscow coterie, Kutúzov, translated: and — Wieland for his humorous productions.

The sentimental youth, the "choice spirit," thirsted for fresh impressions, so he entered on a journey abroad which was to mark an epoch in Russian literature! During this journey, 1789 and '90, by Königsberg, Weimar—where he sought out Herder and Wieland, but not Goethe—Switzerland, Paris, London, and back by sea, he noted down impressions and collected literary matter and began on his return

to depict what he had seen, and still more what he had felt, in the then favourite form of letters, "Letters of a Russian Traveller." These adorned the *Moscow Journal*, which he had lately founded (1791–92), volumes without close sequence which he continued later in almanacs, "Aglaia" and "Aonidæ," then in the "Pantheon of Foreign and Russian Authors." He did not select Sterne as his model, and did really adhere to the route exactly, instructed the Russian reader concerning all things worth seeing, described his localities, and paid his respects to the men of learning from Kant to Lavater; to be sure he interrupted his objective reports continually with gush over Nature, the excessive outflowing of his feelings, fanciful remarks, anecdotes, and stories. Towards events in Paris he was forced out of respect for the Empress to put on as careless and indifferent an air as possible, a thing afterwards turned into a reproach against him, when he was accused of propagating French poison. In England too he concerned himself more with the Constitution and trial by jury than became a Russian. Karamzin is an ardent admirer of humanity: "Everything national is nothing to him as compared with what is human; the great thing is to become men, not Slavs; what is good for mankind cannot be bad for Russians"—yet later he thought differently. Tolerance, true religiousness without barriers of creed, freedom, equality, and brotherhood are also enticing to him. He shares none of the ideals of his Empress, he has no reverence for Frederick the Great, does not mention the Empress, but eulogises Peter the Great, the best enlightener of Russia, and his reforms as the source of many benefits; he longs for quiet, intellectual work in the lap of Nature among friends. And this was no empty phrase; he did really renounce any career, one of the few men of letters by profession. Hence his tributes to England, his enthusiasm for Switzerland; he remained at heart always of Republican principles, and wept at the news of the death of Robespierre, yet this did not hinder him later on from criticising Peter's work of reform like a reactionary Russian of the old school, and

raising his voice in warning against the whittling down of the Autocracy, a want of logic which may very often be found in Russians to-day—liberal, nay antagonistic, principles in speaking and thinking coupled with ruthless and autocratic decision in acting; bookkeeping by double entry, falsifying one's intellectual accounts it would seem, but in reality mere passing inconsistency of the mind in face of a despotism which has grown familiar by the use of centuries and has passed into the flesh and blood.

These letters which later were specially edited and in many ways, especially in the modes of expression, altered, made on the reader an exceptional impression. They did not appeal, as all literature had hitherto done, to the understanding but to the heart, made him shed tears of emotion and joy, depicted Nature and praised all that was good and noble. What did it matter that the purely instructive part of these letters from a traveller was to a great extent borrowed, when the tone, the emotional frame of mind, the jubilation of the heart, fascinated one, and all was expressed in unstudiedly simple, natural, fresh, clear, flowing language! From the barbarism of Lomonósov and from his vaunted high or middle *stil* Karamzín's natural taste had succeeded in keeping him free; with European thoughts and feelings European modes of expression also made their entry. Karamzín did not hesitate to coin new words for the new needs of his style, or to retain "barbarisms" *i.e.*, foreign words. Without pedantry or fuss he brought about this reform; he first really unbound the Russian written language from the "Slovenic" stake, showed it the natural and unforced placing of the words, and brought to it fresh acquisitions. Most that is of his coining has remained permanently current.

To the sentimental tendency the two stories in his journal, "Poor Liza" and "Natalia, the Boyar's Daughter," were of more consequence. They evoked a flood of imitations; the first-named made the environs of the Simeon Monastery, where the scene was ostensibly laid, a gathering-place of all that were given to sentiment. Poor Liza was a virtuous,

inexperienced *paysanne* whom the Moscow Lovelace, Erast, seduces, abandons, puts to shame, so that she ends in suicide. The Boyar's daughter was a still worse offence against all reality with the abducted Natalia as a knight by the side of her lover. Karamzín, however, did not remain true to his own literature: he who excelled all his contemporaries in wide literary culture, in taste and critical acumen, found himself forced, for the sake of his personal safety, to abandon all literary activity of a conspicuous kind; the gloomy days of the old Empress were followed by the terrible reign of the Censorship introduced in 1797, Tumánsky at Riga, and so on, a censorship the incredible narrowness of which was on a par with its incredible malevolence. It forbade the "Year-Books of the Prussian Monarchy" because they contained a criticism of the Papacy and contended that the Reformation was necessary; it forbade "Wanderings through the Netherlands" because they allowed themselves a disrespectful remark about Charlemagne and Charles V; it forbade the "General Manual for Public Schools" because it described slavery as contrary to reason; and "Moral Tales for Children between Eight and Twelve Years Old," because of the proposition that all men are brothers. Thus did the Censorship rage against foreign books; it could not interfere with Russian, because they ceased to appear. Egyptian darkness began to spread unhindered over Russia. The ground gave way under Karamzín's feet; Tumánsky as early as 1792 accused him of disseminating among the inexperienced young the poison habit of honouring all that was foreign and depreciating their own country; he was only saved by his close relations with a favourite of Paul's, but all zest and fondness for elegant literature he lost for ever, and preferred to turn to the investigation of the past. To his verses of that day applies what we said of his prose: they are pleasing in their simplicity and naturalness, above all elegiacally sentimental, bewailing the death of a friend or the transience of earthly happiness.

These, then, are the two main tendencies of the literature of Catherine's reign, that of St. Petersburg, French, and fostered up to a certain limit by the Empress, at once courtly

and satirical; against this Moscow holds its own, from the day that it secured a University, maintaining its freedom and independence through a full century, abandons the trite St. Petersburg ways and seeks new, sets free the writer from humiliating subservience to the hour and its transient favourites and lets him listen to his heart and his feelings, leaving him a moral authority which will be inconvenient to those in power at St. Petersburg. The sundering of minds is indeed no very decided one; Radíshchev is already sensibly affected by the sentimental tendency; Nóvikov was a fault-finder before he became the teacher of his fellow-citizens; but essentially the contrast between Petersburg and Moscow, the strictness of the French style with its rationalism and pseudo-classicism and the German-English freedom of sentiment, form, and language, holds good.

A series of literary phenomena marks the debatable ground between the two tendencies, which, gravitating this way and that, have to some extent no other *raison d'être* than to fill in the gaps of existing literature, to swell the categories of Russian Epic and Anacreontics so that no type recognised by the pseudo-classic codex may remain unrepresented—at bottom the mere padding of literature.

For instance, the want of Epic was crushingly felt. The existing "Petreids" of a Kantemír or Lomonósov, or the "Telemachiad" of Trediakovsky deceived nobody as to this want, which Kheráskov, the Freemason who afterwards fell into disgrace, was first fortunate enough to supply, one of the patriarchs of Russian literature, an enlightened and noble-minded but poetically quite impotent all-round writer, out of whose ample remains, novels, tragedies, odes, and the like, the two Epics, the "Rossiad" (1779) and "Vladímir" (1785) have survived in the minds of posterity. Only the "Rossiad" is, strictly speaking, a true epic, which imitates the "Henriade." In the conventional twelve cantos, with the stereotyped personifications of Heaven and Hell, Virtues and Vices, the usual visions and prophecies of Russia's greatness and the usual episodes and digressions, inventions, pictures, and similes, a purely fictitious narrative of the conquest of Kazán by Tsar

Ivàn IV. in 1552, is put into verse. In it there is nothing Russian but a couple of names; all the rest is Voltaire, Tasso, and Virgil; only the well-meant, yet in spite of all polishing and recasting ill-executed, narrative drags unwieldly along in crushing tediousness. Worse still is the "Vladímir," if only because it is tricked out, not as a narrative but an allegory. Each of us is to seek after Truth and resist temptations, as Vladímir does, till, with the help of the Slav patron saint, St. Andrew, he finds the true faith, the way to which the evil spirit made difficult by temptations of heathen priests, beautiful women, &c. To be sure the Freemasonry of Kheráskov, who, as curator of the University, summoned Schwarz and Nóvikov, and urged them on, need not be held responsible for this subject of the "Vladímir," for long before that he had in story, "Numa Pompilius" (1768, hence also long before Florian's "Numa"), depicted Rome while meaning Russia and modern times, beginning with the motto "*Puissent tous les hommes se souvenir qu'ils sont frères*," and going on to the preaching of true religion in the Temple of Vesta and the concluding poem with its eulogy of Catherine. The young Karamzín could only tell Lavater of two great works in Russian literature, "The Rossiad" and the "Vladímir"; yet only the former, which was not the vehicle of allegorical homily, held its own for decades in undiminished splendour as the national Epic, and could still in the nineteenth century be taken seriously by the lovers of ancient stiltedness and unnaturalness, such as Turgénev's footman, who declaimed it to him in his youth.

Far more vigorous were the essays in humorous epic. The Russian Scarron's name was Máikov, the highly obscene scenes of his "Yelisèy" (Elisha) did not lead one to suspect in him the future Freemason and friend of Kheráskov. Not even mock-heroic poetry could shake off the pseudo-classical ballast, mythology. Thus Bacchus was angry that the farmers, by making brandy dearer, thinned the ranks of his worshippers and incited the waggoner Yelisèy to all sorts of pranks, delivered him from prisons, which he first put through at a meeting of the gods, until at last Zeus had Yelisèy stuck among the soldiers. The scenes leave nothing to be wished

for in the frivolity and mockery of the gods, but they amused by the novel and energetic wrenching of popular action in the tavern and on the streets into the framework of the Alexandrine; others, such as Kotlarévsky, attained the same object by parodying the "Æneid" à la Blumauer in the popular dialect. Less coarse, but all the more frivolous at bottom, was the imitation of La Fontaine's "Psyche" by Bogdanóvich; it seems to us to-day as if some one were dancing the minuet in high, unpolished peasant's boots. His contemporaries were enchanted by this travesty—not the only one by the author, who "emended" the Russian proverbs in the same way—by representing Psyche as a bewitched Russian fairy princess, by the relative ease of the language, by the verse with its varying rhymes and metre, by the easy-going tone of the whole, which set them free from the artificiality and tedium of the academical epic of Kheraskov. Bogdanóvich accomplished in the Epic what Derzhávin with more talent and verve was attempting at the same time in the Ode.

The making of odes had from Lomonósov's time never ceased for a moment; there was such a battle on Parnassus from the volleys of odes of a Maikov, a Kheraskov, and all other "poets," with whom were associated as especially qualified makers of odes Popóvsky, Petróv, Kostróv, the Moscow University poet, and others. To this band belonged also Derzhávin. Unfavourable material conditions had greatly delayed his appearance on the literary stage, and yet it was just Literature that so exceptionally smoothed his path of life, and often rescued him from difficult and almost hopeless quandaries. He became the Russian maker of odes, the singer of Catherine, the flatterer of the Empress and her grandees, the purveyor of a literary gallery of fame to his contemporaries. In the panegyric literature of the century he hit the mark in the white: the reflected glory of Catherine's sun fell on the poet and illumined his endless strophes with borrowed radiance. "With fame wilt thou, I as thy echo live," he rightly asserted of the Empress.

Let the recipe for composing these odes be given in the poet's own words: Enthusiasm, a bold commencement, eleva-

tion, confusion, unity, many-sidedness, brevity, probability, novelty of feeling and expressions, incarnation and enlivening, brilliant pictures, digressions and episodes, turns and leaps, doubts and questioning, antitheses, the weaving in of speeches, allegories, comparisons and metaphors, reduplications and emphasisings, other rhetorical ornament, not seldom morality, but always harmony and taste—*i.e.*, the familiar prescriptions of the æsthetic Catechism, the demand for lyrical disorder, &c., which others too sought to carry out *tant mal que bien.* In what, then, did Derzhavin's speciality consist which raised him far above these, as was at once realised and acknowledged? He began quite with the empty bombast of the Lomonósov manner: it did not even satisfy himself. The advice of his literary friends, the theory of Batteux as to the imitation by Art of the beautiful and attractive in Nature, and the example of Horace, pointed him to a lighter, more pleasing—nay, roguish—tone. His friend Lvov, to wit, set up simplicity and naturalness as the aim of Poetry, and fought against Lomonósov as much because of the restraint that he put on language as because of the immorality of his flattering and begging odes. Thus Derzhávin tore up his ode on the "Birth of the Porphyrogenitus in the North," viz., Alexander I., and in 1779 composed a new one, weaving in a simple description of the winter which struck people by its naturalness, for he ventured *inter alia* to say: "The Nymphs for boredom never slept among the caves, and in the reed-beds the Satyrs gathered round the fire to warm their hands." This parody à la Kotlarevsky or Maíkov simply enchanted his contemporaries. The best known and most important of these odes, which insured him money, the favour of the Empress, and speedy promotion, is the Ode to Felítsa (1782), ostensibly composed by a Tartar Mirza and translated from the Arabic. That there might be no mistake whom he meant by "the godlike Queen of the Kirghiz-Kaisak Horde," the names Felitsa and Chlor, from the Empress's fables for her grandchildren, were put in the first strophe. In those that followed the Empress was not directly praised; the flattery resulted from the contrast of her own

most simple, restlessly active, and strictly just life and dealings and the conduct of her "Mirzas," voluptuous, idle, and reckless. Further on her qualities are enumerated from hearsay, the altered times are praised (l. 356) :—

> "To talk in whispers now they're able,
> And even at a dinner-table
> Refuse, not fearing penalty,
> To drink the health of Royalty;
> A line writ wrong they may scratch out,
> Although Felitsa's name be there,
> And let her portrait fall about
> Upon the floor for want of care."

The Empress is praised, who wishes to be a god, not a tyrant, who allows her subjects to travel abroad and to scratch for metals and provides for the poor. The poem closes with the assurance that the poet expects nothing for it and wishes her long-continued prosperity. To the honour of the truth let it be borne in mind that Derzhávin at that time only knew the Empress by hearsay, and that he changed his opinion when he was able to observe her near at hand. The less sincere he was, the more his odes swelled—up to fifty-eight strophes in the "Portraiture of Felitsa," a principal defect in these poems. Another is their unevenness, that Derzhávin can never keep himself at the same pitch, but slips down into ordinary prose, and confuses what is well done with what is wholly the reverse. Moreover, the ceaseless hyperboles tire us: though there are some few really fine images which elevate and move us, what spoils all is the too far-fetched, artificial, and unreal. Lastly, he falls into the error of stiffness, of enumerating: reflection kills feeling, as in his famous theological odes—in "God," a modern Athanasian Creed in rhyme, and "The Immortality of the Soul," with its scholastic demonstrations, &c. Only in the concluding strophe of "God" does real feeling break through, though it does not compensate us for the word-jangling and the play of antitheses in what went before. The celebrity of the ode, which has been translated numberless times, even into Japanese, bears no relation to its poetical value.

There was no favourite or magnate, no important occurrence, the taking of Ismail or the fall of Warsaw, that his Muse did not celebrate. Thus we read of the stormers of Ismail :—

> "Though there meet them a troop of pallid Deaths
> And yawning Hell gnash at them with her teeth,
> They march like Thunders hidden in dark clouds,
> Like hills moved from their place and silent all.
> Beneath them groans and cries, behind them smoke ;
> They march in silence deep, in dark dread hush,
> Heedless alike of their own selves and Fate."

This ode-making is pitched in a lofty key—"Let thunder of victory resound," "Rejoice, gallant steed," "Deck thyself in echoing Fame," and so forth. Even his latest odes breathed the loftiest patriotism—"As soon as we had looked up to God we sprang like lions from our sleep. We had an enemy, the Tartars, and where are they ? We had an enemy, the Poles, and where are they ? We had this, we had that ; they are gone, but Russia——" and so on. Or take this : "O Ross" (this Greek form was intended to sound specially "noble"), "O valiant people, the only one, high-couraged, great, strong, fame-endowed, tireless in muscle, unconquerable in spirit, simple of heart, tender of feeling, silent in good-fortune, gay in misfortune—in enduring like only to thyself." Hyperboles also brought the poet into conflict with the Empress, who would not let the Ode to Suvórov be printed because of the words "The throne beneath thee, the crown at thy feet, the ruler in captivity," which sounded to her Jacobinical, and still more with Paul's censor, who took objection to the line in "Felitsa," "The iron sceptre of autocracy I will gild with my generosity." The line had to be left out, and thus a gap arose in the strophe because the poet very properly refused to alter it.

By far more frequent were his conflicts with truth. He answered Khrapovitsky, who advised him to celebrate real heroes and leave Potemkin & Co. in their *potemki* (darkness), and who had called him a fault-finder : "As a slave under the yoke I must endeavour to please the powerful. I cannot

rage, only flatter . . . though the critic may blame me for my words, let him at least honour my actions." His steps were turned towards Parnassus by Nature, necessity, and his enemies. It deserves, at any rate, to be admitted that Derzhávin never vented his anger on the fallen; that his poetry could not simply be obtained to order, for the Empress waited a long time in vain for a continuation of the Felitsa odes; he disregarded hints pointing in that direction—nay, it is said that only out of fear of his sarcasms did she nominate him senator. Even under Paul he was pretty obstinately silent. He mustered up courage for direct attacks, indeed, still more seldom—that on Potemkin not till after his death, as compared with Rumiantsev; but in general terms he liked attacking judges and those in power, as in his well-known paraphrase of Psalm lxxxii., to which the Censorship objected.

To sentimental attacks his sensuously inclined nature (hence his fondness for anacreontics, which he cultivated particularly when other themes did not come easy) was always a stranger; but as he liked to be in the fashion, after 1790 distinct Ossianic echoes can be traced in his poems, even in the Ode on Ismail—"Under the mist on the Euxine float the silent groves, the ships, in their midst the ice slope of mountains as it were, or the gray shadow of a man, his shield like the full moon, his scorched spear like a pine," and so on; but most of all in the "Waterfall," on the death of Potemkin, with the splendid opening, the plastic picturing of the magnificent Fall of Kivách, the ode being marred only by its excessive length (seventy-four strophes). His poems seldom condescend to simple objects, though he succeeded in many a charming picture like that of the "Swallow"; others are only apparently simple, as the "Song to Fortune," *i.e.*, the Empress, with sharp hits at various favourites. Therefore he held that he might say of himself, in imitation of Horace's "*Exegi monumentum*"—

> "How from obscurity I came to fame and glory
> By being first to dare to be the celebrator
> Of great Felitsa's worth in lighter Russian style,
> In simpleness of heart to speak of the Creator
> And tell the honest truth to emperors with a smile."

Of translations he furnished but few, beside paraphrases of the Psalms, adaptations of Kosegarten, Hagedorn, Ramler, and Haller. Schiller was too tedious for him ; he found only words in him like chaff in the wind without grain—now Pindar's fire was wanting, now the spice of Horace. All that met with success he endeavoured to imitate, writing impossible dramas, operas, and comedies ; much better were his fables, especially the political ones on the French Revolution and the Partition of Poland—"In vain we dig our helpless neighbour's grave, Worse will it be for us to live with wolf and bear." He remains the singer of Catherine—"Now she is dead what have I left to sing ?" Now his Muse falls asleep. She never really filled up his life properly, was rather a mere pastime, for he says to Felitsa about poetry: "It is dear to you, pleasant, sweet, and useful like nice lemonade in summer." That is the standpoint of Trediakovsky and Lomonósov.

Like Sumarókov's and Kniazhnín's dramas, like Kheráskov's epic, Derzhávin's odes had an educational effect : they told of great men, deeds, and sentiments. In poetical talen he excelled them all, in love of the grand and the imposing, as when he describes a storm on the Caspian Sea—"(The sea-god) defies its waves, leaps now against the horizon, now, flying towards Hades, he strikes with his trident at the ships, his grey locks twist into pillars and his call thunders in the mountains." Golden grains of poetry are scattered among the mass of dull rock.

Far less prolific was Karamzín's friend, Dmítriev, in spite of his long life, though he too rose to be Minister of Justice like Derzhávin, but without the help of his odes, although these often pleased the Empress better : they were, at any rate, shorter and less frequent, otherwise they moved in almost the same channels, were rich in hyperboles and exaggeration. They by no means hindered the poet from ridiculing the makers of odes in a satire—the best he wrote—which he brought out as "Some One Else's Opinions" ("Chuzhóì Tolk"). The feeling that they bored people was already general. Soon Derzhávin gave his adherence to it, but still they remained appurtenances of Parnassus. The "Patriarch

of Literature," as Dmítriev was later surnamed, although during the last two-and-thirty years of his life he wrote nothing, mainly keeping up a copious correspondence with friends such as Karamzín, rested on his cheaply earned laurels: he was even said to have declared that he had done the same for Russian poetry as Karamzín for prose! His merit consisted precisely in attaching himself wholly to Karamzín and imitating him. If the former published a collection of poems, "My Odds and Ends," Dmítriev, a year later, would publish one under the same title. He produced easy, pleasing little things—album poetry—and lost himself in polishing the form, especially in his translations from La Fontaine.

The novel remained almost excluded from elegant literature on account of its prose form, while any one who wrote verses ranked as an author of *belles lettres*. And yet the novel, even then, was the favourite, and above all the most widely-spread form of literature; it had no slight share in the Europeanising of Russia, in softening manners, in spreading humane views, and raising the tone of society. It first made a book a necessity instead of a mere object of luxury; it taught the Russians to read, and its influence went deeper perhaps than that of dramatic literature. A material difference separated it from the latter. Compared with the abundance of original dramas by a Sumarókov or a Kniazhnín there are scarcely any original novels, nothing but translations, some six hundred in number, mainly from the French, for even the English mostly came from French versions. Of course all species are represented, from the moral, sentimental, political, historical, adventurous, oriental (a particular favourite), and the sensational novel of Mrs. Radcliffe to the immoral ones, "Faublas" and the like. The list of authors is a long one, ranging from Le Sage to Florian, Kotzebue and Lafontaine; Rousseau and Voltaire are not wanting; Marmontel and De Genlis were particular favourites. Almost as ample is the list of translators: we find in it von Vízin for the "Seth" of Terrasson, Karamzín and Turgénev for German novels, and so forth. Original works are scarcely two per cent. of the whole.

What especially deserves to be dealt with here is the political aspect, which was wholly alien to the older novel literature. "Télémaque" appeared nine times, in five different translations, after 1747, and their various mentors instructed young princes after its example. The vileness of tyranny was shown by instances, and they indulged in dreams of favoured countries and just Governments. The close of the century first noticeably cooled down this ardour. The most typical instance is furnished by Kheráskov. His "Numa, or Rome's Prosperity," 1768, almost without action, consists mainly of the admonitions of Egeria, who advocates monarchy because of the lawlessness and self-seeking of the ruling Senate, but the monarch must be freely elected. Ruling is a heavy burden, and the father of his country must forget himself. Love, not Pretorian Guards, will protect him. Virtues are more important than laws, and the ruler must be virtuous above all. In his next novel, "Cadmus and Harmonia," 1786, mystical forces already predominate. Cadmus lets himself be seduced, and can only recover his "harmony" after expiations, but sharp outbursts against slavery and the like still occur. In the last Kheráskov already rages against "freedom, the misshapen monster," against the "outcasts of Nature, the friends of equality, that absurdity"—all this in his "Polydore, the Son of Cadmus," 1794, who finds his way among the Thersites—*i.e.*, the French—and brings them, wildly excited and befooled by the freethinkers, back to reason and order, which are only possible in a monarchical State; the same was also to be demonstrated by his "The Tsar and the Rescue of Nóvgorod," 1800, this time in verses. From the crushing tediousness of these "novels" the endless "Arphaxad" of Zakháryin, the "Temple of Truth" of Lvov, &c., the reader fled to Emin, who, in his "Steadfastness Rewarded; or, What Happened to Lizark and Zarmanda," and "The Inconstancy of Fortune; or, Miramond's Adventure," made his heroes enter on the longest journeys and misdirected wanderings, and in the "Letters of Ernest and Doraura" imitated the "New Heloise." Yet he, too, was guilty of a political novel, a

"Themistocles." An anonymous writer made his hero relate endless love stories, "The Unlucky Nicanor; or, The Career of the Russian Nobleman Nicanor." The stories were less piquant than sentimental, and more commonplace than either. More piquant, yet with a moral purpose, was "The Fair Cook; or, The Adventures of a Vicious Woman," by Chulkóv, who displayed his ethnographical proclivities by the inclusion of numerous idioms and proverbs. Even Suvórov's most scanty library boasted this novel. Of course Chulkóv, too, did not fail to treat us to political Utopias. Far the best was tendered by the eighteen-year-old Ismáilov, "Eugene; or, The Ruinous Consequences of Bad Education and Company" (1799–1801). Eugene, with the pair of tutors, Pendard and Sanspudeur, who end in Siberia, does all honour to the Pension Jackassman, worthily carries out the maxims of his parents, the Rascalls, and ends early in the debtors' prison at Petersburg, where he had gone to do duty as an officer of the Guards. He was entered on the rolster of that corps before he was baptized. The morals—or, rather, no morals—of the age are reproduced with a realism which leaves nothing to be desired. From this highly promising start in the realistic novel, however, the author soon passes to other spheres—journalism, fables, and the like. The story we have already alluded to of the Moscow robber Vanka Kain became a regular folk-book.

The ever-increasing array of memoirs does not come into the category of *belles lettres*; for the various diaries, even those of Derzhávin and Dmítriev, were not meant for publicity, often only for the family records, and were not made public till decades later. By their simple tone and moving contents stand out the jottings of the Princess Dolgorúky, who, three days after her marriage, followed her husband to Siberia, and after his execution went into a convent, where in 1767 she recounted her tragic fate up to her arrival at Berézov. Among numerous others, often very detailed like that of Bolótov, let us mention particularly the "Journal" of the Empress's secretary, Khrapovitsky, because it records almost day by day, from 1782 to 1793, the dicta of the Empress on

books—especially her own—and politics, and gives us a valuable insight into the mental life of that remarkable woman. For the sake of curiosity we mention the "Veracious History," &c., of Khomiakóv, a simple soldier, and his simple experiences in the Seven Years' War and elsewhere, and that because, unlike other Memoirs, it appeared at once (1791) in print.

With this we close our contemplation of the century. What advantage had it gained?

For the first time the adhesion of Russia to the mental life of Europe had been achieved. This adhesion was for the time loose and outward, because the consequences of the sins of omission in the past were not easily to be remedied. The century, while chiefly concerned with the solution of external questions of power, had yet not neglected the province of the mind. The substitute for a literature was already ripening. This substitute, for home use, was mostly compounded by people among whom even moderate talents were rare, but they worked for one common object. There was as yet no civil war in this branch of literature, no conflicting tendencies. Enlightenment, humaneness, and virtue were taught by Catherine, as by the Freemasons: Obscurantists and Slavophils had not yet raised their heads. Folks already lulled themselves into a certain optimism with regard to what they had attained, and thought that they already possessed a literature because their Western pigeonholes could be ornamented with Russian names. Criticism was wholly wanting. When a couple of people put their heads together to criticise the "Rossiad," it turned out that they were only capable of simple admiration. There was nothing national in such literature except the language and names; only in rare instances was the matter so also. The spirit and the treatment remained foreign. Moreover, outward forms must first be created, and it was a lasting merit to achieve a melodious versification, a pure prose, a clear style. With the hindrance that the "Slovenic" language caused to accomplish this was much. Men stood confounded and bewildered in face of the people, its needs and ideals, its

language and traditional literature. Serfdom formed an unbridgeable abyss which excluded all contact, and yet already the first stirrings of a lasting interest in it were awakening. Popular lyrics find their way into the collections of songs, people watch usages, nay, even recast in verse popular themes. Here again Radíshchev led the way, freely handling in twelve cantos the popular legend of Bová (Bevis), not suspecting its foreign origin; Karamzín composed an "Ilyá of Múrom" and so on; people even tried to imitate the free metre of the "byliny."

At bottom, however, the paths of literature and the "people" (the Russian expression distinguishes between the whole people and the peasants) nowhere ran side by side. Literature was eliminated from general life and confined to a small circle, and really floated in the air, having struck no root in national soil. It had no sort of traditions, not even the assistance of a more thorough cultivation of its best representatives. How full of gaps, how patched together haphazard, was the knowledge of a Derzhávin or a Dmítriev, for instance! Hence its complete dependence, helplessly childish, on foreign examples, and the one-sided predominance of what was French, not only in society and at Court, but in literature also, even with people that came under German-English influence like Karamzín. They think in French and write in Russian, especially in prose, which, in spite of Karamzín, most emphatically lags behind the poetical diction. The simplicity, the feeling, even the trueness to Nature, which Derzhávin, in his famous depiction of the autumn before Ochákov, and Dmítriev in other descriptive poems at times attain remains beyond the reach of their prose, which is always dry, forced, and clumsy, and sounds like a bad translation.

Literature sinks into a sheer plaything, especially after the last decade when the decisive step was taken for the perfecting of the "light" anacreontic poetry which was to oust the monotonous bombast of the odes. Derzhávin turned the ordinary poetical development topsy-turvy, wrote in his old age the slightest and most frivolous things, sheer trifling, and in much of it succeeded by no means ill. Púshkin will begin with

this pretty poetry, and will finally make a clean sweep of it. Literature is exclusively attuned to the panegyric key as soon as it approaches publicity. Derzhávin alone ventured to interpolate in his laudations of Catherine his "clouds of incense," offensive outbursts against all sorts of favourites—*e.g.*, Zavadóvsky and his "gloriously scholastic pen" from Kiev. Hence such literature could claim no respect or consideration, and if it ventured to pass the bounds of Court poetry, we have already seen what reward attended the radically energetic action of the author of the most thoughtful book of the eighteenth century, Radíshchev's "Journey."

For the people, of course, this branch did not exist, not only because of the language, indeed Radíshchev defended himself on that ground, but also because of its matter, which only here and there touched the skirts of Russian life, and was not capable of any lasting adhesion to it. The most Russian productions of Derzhávin are always invaded by Naiads and Nymphs, and that sort of thing. But at bottom it did not exist for the educated either, who preferred to have recourse to the sources and models themselves, the French instead of the Russians who watered them down. Thus it came about, and the exclusively French bringing up tended the same way, that aristocratic Russians, not to mention ladies, had no appreciation of their own literature. While no slip in French was pardoned, they could not even spell properly in Russian. They were at home everywhere except in their own house. Alexander I., for instance, had absolutely no taste for Russian literature. It is invariably the French library of the father or the neighbour which awakens and satisfies the first craving for reading. So it was with Karamzín, Púshkin, and others. Thus the circle which Russian literature affected was a very limited one. A number of people in good society, mostly of rank and high office, well known to each other, composed that literature: all envy, quarrelling, and hatred were absent. They praised each other sincerely and mutually; each took advice of the other in certain expectation of the process being reciprocated; they debated amicably over matter and form, rhymes (very unsought for) and words, and rejoiced in the result. Not

in life, but all the more on Parnassus, reigned the most soothing camaraderie. There were no disputes about rank, and the number of epithets to be bestowed—Russian Pindar, Horace, and so forth down to La Fontaine and Scarron—was not easy to exhaust. The more dreadful the clouds that piled themselves up over Russian mental life, the more idyllic and careless was their existence on the Russian Parnassus. Literature had lost all sympathy with the age, and seemed condemned to sterility, to sheer trifling. Karamzín and Radíshchev were silent, the others played the Anacreon, pretty phlegmatically. They seemed to have no character, not even as much as Maíkov once, and before him the infamous Barkóv, the pornographer, possessed. There was no oneness with Nature or their surroundings. Few in number as were the more recent productions of the popular Muse, they yet breathed a different air—*i.e*, the indictment against Yorsh Shchetínnikov (Perch Bristleton), which ridiculed far more severely judicial procedure, perhaps even in the seventeenth century, than Sumarókov now did. There all was Russian, not conventional or cosmopolitan. To be sure, here already the fatal effect of the Censorship must be taken into account. What are promotions or snuff-boxes full of ducats for Derzhávin and his fellows as compared with the crushing pressure that made every decent thought impossible? When, decades later, Prince Vyazemsky declared, "Give us not a complete, only a modified, freedom of printing, and in one year our literature will transform itself," this might also be true of the close of the eighteenth century, when everything seemed paralysed. But the soil had been turned, seeds of European culture and mental work dropped into it. They had only to survive the dreadful winter to be called out of the ground by the breezes of spring. What though the visible successes of Peter and Catherine kept their contemporaries fully occupied, and they quite overlooked the quiet, slow working of knowledge and art, in the end here too successes were to be achieved which were scarcely inferior to those others. They were indeed reserved for the nineteenth century, but their buds are rooted in the eighteenth.

CHAPTER V

THE AGE OF ALEXANDER I

The new ruler—Digging up of Catherine's mummies—Their battle against the modern tendency—Shishkóv and Karamzín—Bátiushkóv—St. Petersburg literature—Rylêev and Griboêdov—The Moscovites, Karamzín the historian: Zhukóvsky the translator—Russia's classical studies—Narézhny and his novels.

"THE age is new! A young and splendid Tsar has come to us to-day along the path of spring. Silent has fallen the north wind's harsh roar; hidden is the threatening, awful glance: on the face of the Ross has joy shone out. . . . Is this not the re-birth of old happiness? Catherine will rise again. . . . She will, in her grandson, reign over us for ever. . . . The people's sighs, and streams of tears, the prayers of injured souls, shall rise high like a vapour and arouse the thunder in the clouds: of a sudden it shall crash down upon the proud pinnacles. Give ear a hundred times unto this truth. Ye mighty powers, give ear and see that ye oppress not the people given you to rule. . . . Not such art thou. . . ."

This ode of Derzhávin's could not indeed be printed, for its references to the *coup d'état* which Catherine planned and the catastrophe which befell Paul were too unconcealed: all the more quickly did it circulate in copies. "If the Secret Chancery still existed, you would soon be . . ." said the senators to Derzhávin. It found the loudest echo. St. Petersburg society, breathing more freely, gave

itself up to jubilation, for the "glorious beginning of the days of Alexander" gave them reason enough. Some twelve thousand exiles were summoned home, the terrible Secret Chancery abolished, political offences were to be brought for trial before the ordinary Courts, the prohibition on foreign books was removed—one liberal ordinance followed close on another in the "newly reformed" Russia.

The period of peace—and Europe seemed to have regained its lost balance—was to be utilised for sweeping reforms in the interior. They did not indeed approach the most important, the abolition of serfdom, because they shrank from the material side of the task, but the Emperor left no one in doubt what his feeling as to slavery was. As little could they make up their minds, as Radíshchev demanded, to wholly do away with the censorship, but a very liberal proposal limited its powers and arbitrariness very greatly. Instead of the previous administration by Boards, Ministries were established, and the greatest heed was paid to the Ministry of Instruction. New universities were set up, and liberal statutes adopted after the foreign pattern; only theological studies were reserved by the Synod for its seminaries. Foreign scholars were called in, and care was taken to provide Russian successors. The fair intentions of the Emperor and of his mostly youthful advisers, Czartoryski, Novosíltsev, and the rest, were publicly known.

The young Emperor was, something like Karamzín, a Republican at heart. La Harpe, the Swiss, the Jacobin, who in his own canton supported the "party of disorder" to the best of his power, had as if by accident been intrusted by the Empress with the teaching of the two princes, and between teacher and pupils there developed a confidence—nay, a friendship—which stood the test of all the trials of time. La Harpe sowed in the youth's breast the seeds of a humaneness, perhaps somewhat vague, of a love of freedom and of truth, which, without being directed to one determined object, Russia, always floated before the eyes of the youth and the man. Too late did the Empress sever the union; the Emperor Paul even forbade Alexander to correspond with his teacher; this

sudden revulsion only confirmed the rapidly ripening youth in his noble dreams, and taught him deeply to conceal his real intentions and sentiments. The life at Court, the impossibility of finding a *single* honourable man, the conviction that he was surrounded by nothing but thieves, made loathsome to the young man who was destined for such surroundings, the splendour of the coming heavy burden, which he intended to lay aside as speedily as possible. Then came the weary time of probation, with its parade-ground duty, over the secrets of which the stupid father watched so gravely that in the end he infected his intelligent son and inoculated him with the taste for the idiocy of mounting guards and grand reviews. In these years, then, Alexander imbibed the ineradicable distrust of everybody and everything which he hid behind the most unaffected of masks. Even as a young child he betrayed capacity for acting, and his grandmother took hearty delight in the pleasure which her pieces caused her beloved grandson, though he did not Russify Sheridan's "School for Scandal," as people relate. Energy, spontaneous displays of will, and consistency remained strangers to his character, dreamily fantastic and most easily led, like that of all Slavs. This uncertainty displayed itself even during the honeymoon of the new Government.

A clear case was, that there were summoned to the head of the new institutions men who were either their sworn enemies or at best indifferent concerning them, fossils from Catherine's time—the unearthing of mammoths is Russia's speciality to this day—a Zavadovsky as First Minister of Education whose only claim was his one-time physical beauty (we have come across him already in Derzhávin's allusion), a Derzhávin as Minister of Justice, and later another poet, Dmítriev, in the same post. Or did the Emperor think that by these appointments he had fulfilled his promise to rule in Catherine's spirit, proclaimed when he mounted the throne? The "pillars" of the Government, Catherine's greybeards, were not satisfied with it; their grumbling vented itself, in the case of one at least of them, in a quite unexpected attack which cut deep into all literature. The course of the affair was as follows:—

The accession of Alexander had at length loosened the tongue of literature, which had hitherto been dumb, not merely in a series of odes, including "Kirghiz-Kaisak," and panegyrics, but above all in a new publication. Karamzín was the first to come on the scene. His *Messenger of Europe* (*Vêstnik Evropy*), which he himself published in 1802 and 1803, and after him others up to 1830, formed a new type of periodical, radically different from his own earlier *Moscow Journal*, if only because it now dealt with politics as well; to be sure a considerable portion of it still consisted of translations and extracts, but the amount and variety of the contents contrasted favourably with all earlier attempts; its success with the reading world was indisputable. More space was set apart for *belles lettres* and criticism; the latter, which Karamzín had before been the first even to skirt incidentally, now for the first time became permanent. In this magazine he printed his historical sketch Martha, the Posádnitsa (Mayoress) of Nóvgorod, and unveiled what he had really long had at heart. The success of the journal, of his poems and stories, no longer attracted him; scarcely had he put the former on a firm basis when he turned wholly to annals and documents, to the reports of foreigners and the works of his predecessors, and became Russian Historiographer. Although he had wholly withdrawn himself from the arena of public opinion—he was only twice to leave his study and appear before the Tsar with political minutes, which for a long time were treated as State secrets, and existed for the public only in their consequences—his authority remained unchallenged; those who knew him could not escape the charm of his personality, and he had the most enthusiastic admirers, who became his indignant defenders when there entered the lists against his authority an anonymous assailant, a mummy of Catherine's, Admiral Shishkóv, a good man and ardent patriot but not a broad intellect. As he could not ruin the Russian fleet, he tried it on with Literature.

The admirable calm, quiet, and unity which reigned in the artificial gardens of the Russian Academe, with their carefully measured off walks and beds, mock-heroic Epic, Idylls,

Elegies, and so on, and its tail-coated and powdered visitors, which was not even interrupted by Kutúzov's denunciations of Karamzín's Jacobinical poison (for these were addressed, not to the literary Areopagus, but to the Secret Chancery)—this calm was now disturbed for ever by the most excellent Admiral and student of words. With him it was a question of the new Karamzínic style, but with it the new ideas were also to be given to the knife. His "Weighing of the Old and New Styles" let loose, if one may use strong expressions in face of the insignificance of the then literature, a flood of polemics, and evoked antagonisms, of persons and of principles, for almost two decades. The false teaching of Lomonósov as to the importance of Church Slavonic found adherents both in verse and prose; the last and most important was this very Shishkóv, who endeavoured to safeguard the status of that language which was endangered by Karamzín and the younger men. Apparently the dispute turned upon mere words, whether they should retain French ones, frame Russian ones upon them, eliminate those that were obsolete, fuse the written with the conversational language, and so might ignore the Church Slavonic as almost a foreign tongue, or, on the other hand, whether they were bound to look on it as the Russian mother-language, of which modern Russian only represented the latest phase, and ought to raise the written, and through it the spoken, language up to its level again, freshen up the obsolete words, and replace the foreign ones by new formations.

The quarrel was, however, only apparently philological; through French they aimed at the French, *i.e.*, the revolutionary spirit: "The traces of the language and spirit of the infamous French Revolution, hitherto unknown among us, had begun to appear, and spread rapidly in our books; contempt for their faith had begun to show itself in contempt for Church Slavonic." People sacrifice Morality, Reason, and Knowledge to "Elegance," or, as Shishkóv has it, "Nonsense," of language. "Up to Lomonósov's time we had stuck to our sacred songs, our holy writings, reflections on God's greatness, Christian duties and belief, which taught us a peaceful, quiet

life, not the corrupt morals whose fruits France is now tasting." "In the endeavour to separate our present speech from the old what else can one see but the desire that the language of Belief, become incomprehensible, should no longer be able to control the language of the Passions?" What was Shishkóv's ultimate aim one of his Moscow opponents described very accurately: "Does not the author mean by a convenient reviving of the old speech to lead us back to the old ways and conceptions as well?" It was in these disputes that there first came up the word "Slavophil" which after 1830 was to acquire such significance. Thus the cradle of the Slavophils stood on the Neva, and its god-parents were the "eagles of the Catherine epoch," those bastards of reaction and Chauvinism. For Shishkóv, too, discovered excellencies in the Old Russian mind, a literature even before the Thessalonian brothers,[1] with the same ignoring of all history which distinguished the Slavophils after him.

What the obscurantist Shishkóv lacked in knowledge and taste he made up for in obstinacy and zeal. The repetition of his allegations and theses in brochures and counter-criticisms did not suffice him, as little as the stillborn Slaveno-Rossian (*sic*) Academy of which he was President. So he brought a second dead offspring into the world, the "Company of the Lovers of Russian Speech" (1801), with public sittings, branches, honorary members, and papers, which he printed. Official rank decided the order of sitting. All the mummies of Catherine's day were summoned, and Derzhávin became the soul of the enterprise after Shishkóv had been summoned to other fields. The "Company," which after Derzhávin's death sank softly to sleep, became celebrated, not through its pompous surroundings and the deadly tediousness of its lectures, but by the parody of it, the "Arzamas" Union, which the enlightened youth of St. Petersburg founded, likewise with sittings and protocols which Zhukóvsky embodied in comic hexameters, and members who took nicknames from his ballads and the like—*e.g.*, Púshkin, known as the Cricket—and as an entrance speech always gave an imitation of some

[1] *I.e.*, Cyril and Methodius.

member of the original Association. In time the parody wore itself out, and when more serious "Arzamasites" proposed some actual performance—to begin with, the publishing of a periodical—no warm interest was displayed in it. The "Arzamasites," so styled after a Russian Gotham, departed the literary life almost more quietly than their opponents. They had never, indeed, won their way to publicity, for as yet Literature could not keep a hold on strenuous folks. More than five years, complains a contemporary, no one could hold out at it; the most promising wits, after a couple of attempts, turned their back on it finally, and devoted themselves exclusively to an official career, for, in face of the total keeping in tutelage of public opinion and the absolute irresponsibility of the Censorship, what else could Literature be than sheer foolery? To be styled a Russian writer was felt, even by Pushkin, as an unmerited humiliation. Thus passed fruitlessly by the abundance of wit and playfulness which in this aristocratic Association for the cultivation of sociability was undoubtedly brought together. Individual Arzamasites we shall keep on coming across in the course of our narrative—General Orlóv, Blúdov, Turgénev, Vyázemsky, and others.

Meanwhile the times had quickly and radically changed; the concern for inner reforms, education and the like, was totally repressed by the straining of all resources in the conduct of quite purposeless wars. The Emperor, but lately an admirer of the Revolution, had let himself be persuaded into a new character, and as the refuge of legitimacy quite superfluously staked Russia's strength for every kingdom of Brentford with which Napoleon had an explanation. He brought on himself the most galling humiliations: the Corsican, whom people had offered to drag in a halter to the Noblemen's Club at Moscow, put to rout the Russian armies, so accustomed to victory; the incapacity and want of conscience of the field-marshals, Bennigsen, for instance, could not be redeemed by the self-sacrificing valour of the soldiers. But the inglorious struggle with the French to some extent vivified Literature, and gave it, for the first time in its annals, at once colour and an object.

First the threatened collision, then the military slaps in the face, evoked an anti-French feeling which, with the permission of the higher authorities (for from this time forth Russia waived the right of unofficial thinking), could find expression in Literature, in the periodicals, in dramas and comedies. This combating of their chosen teachers by their ablest pupils found vent in the wildest vagaries; a Glínka, for instance, brought up wholly in the French way, and once a Frenchman rather than a Russian, now in his enthusiastic admiration for everything Russian, and contempt for everything not Russian, published in his magazine, the *Russian Messenger*, his discovery of wonder after wonder in Old Russia, all possible virtues, enlightenment, and philosophy; thus in his eyes the "Kormchaya,"[1] a translation of a Greek Treasury of Ecclesiastical Law, contained everything on which the true welfare of the individual or all society can be based. In vain did sensible people protest, declaring that he called those who were on dry ground to him in the morass; he became popular and attained, in 1812, the summit of his importance, from which he fell rapidly and for ever. He had ex-Frenchmen as his fellow-workers, *e.g.*, the unwilling hero of the burning of Moscow, Rostópchin, whose "Outspoken Thoughts of a Russian Nobleman," full of the most violent attacks on the French, converted Glinka and set in motion the whole of this anti-French and anti-foreign literature. Seven thousand copies were soon caught up. Rostópchin, of course a perfect Frenchman, was for that matter, as compared with the innocent enthusiast Glinka, a keen, sharp-witted man who unfortunately looked at Literature as a secondary matter, like a *grand seigneur*; he wrote splendid Russian, simple, strong, and pithy, and knew how to adopt a pseudo-popular style such as made his famous Moscow proclamations in 1812 so brilliant. Tolstoy, in "Peace and War," exposes these farces somewhat churlishly. The name retained for generations a literary reputation; its last bearer writes in French again, like her ancestor.

We refrain from further enumerating these questionable

[1] Sc. *kníga*, book = Book of guidance, Nomocanon. Connected with *kormá*, steering-place.

productions, but that Shishkóv's advocacy of the old style against the "elegant" was not at once laughed out of existence was due to this simultaneous tendency, this awakening of national feeling, for which the old Admiral found somewhat worthier expression in the Manifestoes which he had in 1812 to concoct as Secretary of State. The dispute about words he no longer continued: Karamzín found the solution when, in his inaugural speech as member of the "Slaveno-Rossian" Academy, he disputed its right to enforce a language, relegated it to its proper limits, and recognised Literature, not the Academy, as the court of appeal in matters of language.

The patriotic wave bore forward other works also. In the first decade the greatest attention was aroused, the first splendid success on the stage achieved, by the tragedian Ózerov, a Frenchman, of course—Speránsky declared that he wrote French better than Russian; at any rate, he wrote in French first. Just in Derzhávin's eyes he found no great favour, but though over his close imitations of French tragedies he throws a wash of sentiment, he belongs wholly to the Petersburg French school, in spite of the veneer of sentimentality that he laid over his tragedies, which were strictly imitated from the French. The weakest of these ("Dimitri Donskói" 1807) had an unheard-of success, because the people of the day saw in Dimitri Alexander, in Mamái and his Tartars the Corsican, and received every patriotic tirade with flaming hearts and weeping eyes; the gross disregard of time and spirit in the action disconcerted them not in the least.

The success of the other tragedies, even the Ossianic one styled "Fingal," is to a large extent to be ascribed to the actress who played the heroines of them, Semyónova, afterwards Princess Gagárin; her magnificent declamation of Ózerov's verses, which were very harmonious, produced the principal effect. For the same patriotic reasons, in 1807, a similar success was assured to the "Pozhársky" of Krukóvsky. As a rule the repertoire was mainly provided for by Prince Shakhovskoy, Ózerov's opponent, author of a vast number of comedies which fought against the sentimentality, first of Karamzín, and later of Zhukóvsky.

To the circle of Derzhávin and his "Besêda" (Company, Conversation), even though he ridiculed it in his Fable, "The Quartet," belonged the fabulist Kryłóv. He, too, was led away by the temper of 1807 into comedies with anti-French "points," which secured him an ephemeral success; the wit and intelligence which was wholly wanting in them he saved up for his Fables. Decades before he had tried his hand at *belles lettres*, but did not find his proper vocation till 1806. He then printed his first imitations of La Fontaine, soon followed by Fables of his own; the first collection appeared in 1809, containing twenty-three, constantly followed by fresh ones, up to the last edition in his lifetime, 1843, which comprised nine books. Their popularity was unexampled; Smirdín got rid of 40,000 copies between 1830 and 1840. Thus Kryłóv became the true fabulist of the Russians; he ended the chain of development begun by Sumarókov and continued by Chemnitzer and Dmítriev. As against his Izmáilov's Fables, for instance, could not at all hold their own, being more properly satires like those of Sumarókov, directed against petty officials, and harsh, not to say coarse, in expression. Kryłóv did not content himself, like Dmítriev, with mere translation: he enriched the fable by introducing new themes; but whether he translated or imitated La Fontaine or Pilpai, adopted an old idea or devised something quite new, he was always the same, and stamped his own impress on the old or new material. Detail, form, and often *gros bon sens* were his. He was the first to get into touch with the pointedly frank speech of the people, to which many at that time objected; his style, stuffed too full of idioms, is not graceful or easy, but sensible, plastic, and pregnant, almost heavy. Not yet are all clumsinesses weeded out; the language is in places out of date, the images strictly conventional, with their zephyrs and nymphs, above all the conceptions are antiquated. A man of hard intelligence, at bottom satirically inclined, he hated abstractions, dreaded the disintegrating influence of literature —French, of course: his Fables often aimed at circumstances in France which were wrongly interpreted as Russian; he stood for *gros bon sens* to the extent of one-sidedness, and

inculcated a dull, commonplace morality ; on the other hand, he depicted life as it is, not as it ought to be. His Fables are by no means free from personal references ; his own most prudent way, and the circumstances of the time—even he, a sort of Court poet, did not escape collisions with the Censorship, ever growing more insolent—necessitated such a concealing of the "points," such a generalising of the expressions, that the same fable might be capable of manifold interpretation. The events of 1812 drew many a political Fable from him : on Napoleon surrounded by enemies, on the admiral who lets him escape by land ; there are others on the education of the Emperor, who was inoculated with views suited to the pocket Republic of Berne, not to a gigantic Empire. Even Moscow, which in its politics of the nearest steeple only recognised its Dmítriev as a fabulist, and endeavoured to ignore Krylóv, gets a reminder ; the excellent sermon does not move the peasant, he does not belong to that parish. There are not wanting allusions to social relations, as to what the various classes contribute : the nobility foliage, the peasants roots, and so on. In particular instances you notice the reflex of the questions of the day ; for instance, it is like a plain echo of Shcherbátov's work when in the "Ducat" from constant polishing, *i.e.*, progress, the metal itself becomes affected, the mind slackens, morals disappear. One notices the deliberation with which particular themes are repeatedly handled ; *e.g.*, it is only the fault of the dogs that you cannot get to the master, but he has himself let them off the chain. Leanings towards Derzhávin—the Fables formed a leading centre of attraction in the lectures of the "Besêda"—no longer surprise us : Horse and Rider, not meant for the Decembrists, but for France ; the Oracle, sagacious as long as a sagacious priest is behind. Allusions predominate to the hereditary defects, injustice, corruption and stupidity. The most biting of them was—here the Emperor first interfered to allow of its printing—the "High Dignitary." He is let straight into Paradise because on earth he let his secretaries do everything, his own stupidity would have cost country and people too dear. Even greater as a matter of course is the predominance of

general human subjects, the common possession of all fabulists. The Fables have no claim to Æsopian brevity; they delight in depicting details, in jovial epic expansion like La Fontaine's, whose free, uneven versification they imitate. Krylóv attached the greatest value to polish of expression, owing to which and to the exceptional laziness of this Oblómov [1] of Russian literature, who spent almost all his time in his dressing-gown, read the stupidest novels in the world, and at most fed sparrows or taught children, the number of his Fables, in spite of almost forty years of work at them, is not large. The strange thing is that he simply thought and spoke in fables: those that he was too lazy to work up, but burst out with them at times, are just the wittiest and most biting. When Púshkin had read out his romantic Shakespearian chronicle, "Borís Godunóv," and smilingly remarked to the inveterate classicist: "It cannot please you, you cannot find it beautiful," Krylóv rejoined: "Why not? Listen to me; when the preacher thanked God for having ordered everything in the world as fairly as possible, the hunchback came and reproached him, saying, 'Evidently you only mocked at me when making such a contention.' 'How so?' replied the preacher; 'for a hunchback you are quite handsome.'" And when they fetched him to a banquet in his honour he asked whether that was not too much of a good thing: "For to be sure I am like a naval hero to whom no disaster could happen because he never ventured far out to sea." He overate himself on partridges and died of it. A friend visited him just before, to whom he told the story of the farmer who overloaded his horses; it was only dried fish, and yet the horse succumbed. Then at once he added the point, "Too much of a good thing always does harm, however one may take it." According to his own confession the truth seemed to him more bearable when half veiled, and it was thus he told it to the world and its great ones, *e.g.*, in the "Geese" and many another fable.

In the other provinces of literature there reigned at St. Petersburg no busy, at least no new life. The making of

[1] The hero of Goncharóv's novel of that name, a byword for "Khalátnost," or living in a dressing-gown.—TR.

Odes sank into official versifying, and people took by choice to "light poetry," Madrigals, Epigrams, and Songs of which some by Dmítriev and Merzlakóv attained great popularity, added to which were Elegies, Letters, Satires by Princes Gorchakóv and Dolgoruki and Milonov, of course all of them in the "smiling vein." Talent was lacking, but in revenge there was abundance of people without it who gathered more particularly round the "Besêda," names with the ring of absurdity or tediousness—a Bobróv,[1] a Khvostóv, whom another made a target for his jests with the bitten-off language of his fables which Krylóv and Vyazemsky parodied. One of the most talented among them was V. Pushkin, an uncle of the poet, brought up entirely on French literature, a Voltairian *i.e.*, Epicurean, yet who was distinguished from the St. Petersburgers by his happy diction and deliberate crusade against Shishkóv and the literary Old Believers. Much was over-free, for French frivolity and lasciviousness now found their way more unhindered than ever into literature. His remains, be it said, are mostly only fables, anecdotes, and matters of wit and taste, not feeling. Voêykov's satire "The Mad House" ("Sumashedshi Dom"), with its satirical stanzas against all men of letters, the author included, excited attention.

To avoid misunderstandings let us dwell on the fact that the printed works of that day give no proper idea of the literature; the blockheads, Khvostóv and the like, besieged the presses; all that was gifted and excelled, especially parodies, pamphlets, satires and comic narratives in the La Fontaine style despised print. In MS., as if Gutenberg's art had never been invented, the best productions circulated, such as the viperous satire of Prince Gorchakóv, "Noël," where the ministers and grandees of Alexander I. appear before the New-born with their wishes and gifts. Certain stanzas—that on Admiral Chichagóv, on Muraviov-Apostol, on Pestel, Governor-General of Siberia, who, as Zeus the earth from Heaven, sways and plunders Siberia from the Neva; on the new "Rhetor" the Metropolitan—

[1] "Bobr"—beaver, "Khvost"—a tail.

"The Neva's Bossuet, I never
Have dreamed at all of being clever.
What one had breathed another said;
By chance I'm thought a clever head!"—

are simply superlative. Thus arose the separation between the printed but fraudulent and the genuine written, "proscribed," literature. And the mockers never ceased. Gorchakóv was followed by Vyazemsky, he in his turn by the Moscovite Sobolévsky, with his venomous but humorous verses on Pávlov, Odoévsky, and the rest in the forties and fifties. Many in consequence of this aversion to print fell into unmerited oblivion like Gorchakóv, a classicist but a despiser of the want of talent of the "Besêda," a master of language and a wit.

K. Bátyushkov also passed through Púshkin's school, grew up in the same unquestioning worship of the poet (not the philosopher, God forbid!), Voltaire, and the honeyed Parny and took part, like Púshkin, in the grapple with the Shishkovites with two satires, "A Vision on the Banks of Lethe" and "The Singer in the Camp of the 'Besêda'"—after a poem of Zhukóvsky's in which, leaving aside Shishkóv's real merits, which lay in quite another sphere, he damned everything, neck and crop. Unlike Púshkin, however, he extended his literary culture by direct return to the Classics—Tibullus and Horace in particular—as also by his acquaintance with Europe gained as an officer in the triumphal march of the Russian armies. The events of 1812 had made the patriotic vein swell in him too, but his righteous anger soon passed off; all the more strenuous grew his cult of the Muses, which was to acquire a new stamp by his acquaintance with the Italians, especially his favourites Tasso and Petrarch. Even to him poetry was no longer the sheer filling up of leisure hours, but required the whole man, and even he demanded the congruity of the life and words of the poet. His own poetry, indeed, did not as yet quite correspond to these ideals, in the spirit of anthological Lyric and Horatian knowledge of life it recommended moderate enjoyment and Epicureanism, but already these glorifications of Love and Pleasure were marred by the discords of Pessimism or the voicings of a deep melan-

choly, as witness his "Dying Tasso" and his bitter complaints of men and the world which, as if in scorn, was crowning him after having hunted him to death. Melancholy and pessimism were with him not only a matter of fashion, though already he is translating Byron, but together with nervous haste and varying moods, the precursors of an inherited mental malady which clouded his mind for more than thirty years; the work from which he was suddenly torn away was to be completed by a greater man. But despite all anthological disguise, in spite of the ancient conventional trappings which he did not venture to throw off, he was a real and meritorious poet. In the restricted circle he marked out for himself, in the singing of Friendship (as in "My Friend's Shade," an elegy with a splendid prelude, telling how misty Albion disappears from the sight of the seafarer), Love, and Epicurean feelings, he attained an unclassical copiousness and a picturesqueness of expression which rose far above all French mannerism.

It was not, however, the mere precursors of mental derangement which turned Bátyushkov into a pessimist and a grumbler whom even the doings of the "Arzamas" could not satisfy. He had tasted abroad the Tree of Knowledge, and when this Russian Ulysses returned after his wanderings he did not know his Ithaca again. His fate was shared by the whole of the aspiring younger generation. The ominous development of the Republican Alexander had at length driven the present "Bulwark of Legitimism" into the hands of mystics, had filled him with the deepest distrust of all Liberalism, and above all caused him to give Russia up. After he had been brought by machinations and denunciations to get rid of the great internal reformer Speransky, as a sort of scapegoat, the influence of the cruel, cowardly scoundrel, one of the most pitiful that the world's history knows, the Minister of War, Arakchéev, grew more and more threatening, and behind him were the reactionaries and fanatics, the priests, Seraphim the Metropolitan, and Photius the Archimandrite, Shishkóv, and the denouncers Kutúzov, Magnitsky, and Rúnich. Especially after 1819, when the Tsar, now wholly

under Metternich's influence, returned from Germany, was the fury of Reaction let loose. It fell on the Freemasons and Pietists; the former had in Russia long since become bigots instead of rationalists and deists. One of them, the Minister of Education, Galítsyn, the patron of Jung-Stilling and Eckarthausen, the friend of Madame Krüdener, the intermediary between Baader and the Emperor, fell a victim to the Orthodox. All the Lodges, the Bible Society, and so forth were closed in 1822, Shishkóv being Minister for Popular Obfuscation, as Karamzín called it to the Emperor's face. It was now first that the pious crusade against Science, against the University Professors, began in the St. Petersburg trial. Accordingly Curator Magnitsky had the anatomical preparations of the Kazan University buried in consecrated ground; also the fury of the Censorship knew no bounds. The reign of Alexander, hailed as the dawn of freedom, and exceeding the most joyous prognostications, was wrapped in dark clouds when death, at Taganrog, overtook the travel and parade-loving Emperor. The most interesting thing about it is that Alexander I. in 1819, like Alexander II. in 1881 and Nicholas II. in 1905, was engaged in considering a Liberal Constitution for the country, only that he already hated and most carefully avoided both expressions, bringing in with his own hand instead the term "legally free organisation of the State."

The more energetically the Reaction went to work, the more assuredly Shishkóv ascribed the Revolution to the teaching of the people and the abolition of serfdom, the less were the younger men disposed calmly to accept this humiliation and self-mutilation of Russia—least of all those who in the great campaigns had come to know country and people beyond. Russia had not restored to Europe her freedom in order to be exposed at home to worse and worse slavery. Thus fermentation set in among the body of officers at St. Petersburg and also in the southern army. In the day of "Tugendbunds" and all possible secret political societies this example was followed here as well. The first associations partly adopted the statutes of the "Tugendbunds," dreamed

of legal propaganda, if possible to be sanctioned by the Emperor, of controlling the too-powerful bureaucracy, of the granting of States General. In course of time the leagues cast their skin, rejected the lukewarmer elements, and formulated more and more Radical programmes, until advantage was taken of the Emperor's death and the confusion as to the succession and the taking of the oath to attempt a coup at St. Petersburg. This did not extend beyond military circles and was at once suppressed, December 14, 1825. The report of the Commission of Inquiry was put together by Blúdov, the "Cassandra" of the "Arzamas," the strange man of letters who up to his fortieth year could not brace himself to any performance and now of a sudden was to become famous by his "Prologue to Hangman's Acts," for on the strength of his report 125 "Dekabrists" were condemned, the mental élite of Russia. Five were hanged; the first was Colonel Pestel, the second the poet K. Rylêev.

This enthusiast was in earnest as to his martyrdom; he longed for death because the contrast between ideal and reality, the vapid dealings of the world, disgusted him; he placed poetry also at the disposal of his revolutionary propaganda. He had long since snapped his fingers at the Censorship: his indignant satire "To the Favourite," aimed at Arakchéev, slipped through as an "Imitation of the Satire of Persius on Rubellius," which, of course, is not known to classical scholars; the historical songs of a champion of Freedom and hater of Russia, the Pole Niemcéwicz, he imitated in his "Dúmy," or Historical Songs of the Ukraine. Karamzín's work had awakened historical interest, therefore it excited no remark that Rylêev celebrated all remarkable incidents in Russian History in song: the purpose lay in the choice and handling of the subject. When he made Olga, at the grave of her Igor, impress on her little son the duties of a ruler, in 964—"Be a father to thy subjects, rather prince than warrior, a friend of thine own, a menace to outsiders," and so on—or puts into Catherine II.'s mouth as towards her great-grandson, Alexander II., the words: "Enough of warlike fame for Russia; now let there be time for enlightened government,

for an Antonine on the throne"; when he makes Volýnsky as a patriot defend his country from being pillaged by the alien Biron; when he gets together all the instances of strength of character and courageous self-sacrifice, we can have no doubt as to his intention: his purpose was, through historical pictures, to inculcate patriotism and the love of independence. This intention, for the first time in Russian literature, to instruct and teach by example, may excuse many historical blunders, the choice of very questionable figures, and, as with Niemcéwicz, the weak execution. He is by no means well versed in times and men; for the ninth as for the eighteenth century he had only the same limited means at his disposal: the execution was totally monotonous, description of the place of action, words of the hero, moral reflections. Púshkin's poetical sense was offended by this lack of style, and he purposely took in hand the same themes in many cases, Olég, for instance, simply in order to show how a poet did it. But Rylêev expressly declared, "I am no poet; I am a citizen!" Side by side with this purpose, what characterised him even more than Bátyushkov was his pessimism, a laceration of feeling, a weariness of the world which led to estrangement from the common herd and avoidance of that world. Byron's influence was already on the increase with him, and his Voynarovsky already wore quite a Byronic mask. But that was the only tribute that Rylêev paid to the new Romantic tendency: although he was Púshkin's poetical pupil, yet he still clung to his admiration for Derzhávin and worked with the old appliances of French rhetoric—true poetical feeling breaks through only in places. He whose name was so long under a ban, whose "Dúmy," circulated in writing only, could awaken noble sentiments, is a shining example, a hero, whom all Literatures must envy the Russian; his name is a watchword, the aureole of political martyrdom ensures him a place high above the mass of literary men.

With the almost Asiatic fatalism of the Russians, their long-suffering and gentle submission which so greatly facilitated the ruling of them by all Teuton or Mongolian conquerors, the tumultuously protesting tone of Rylêev contrasts forcibly: so

did the cadet despise and insult his teachers, the youth the all-powerful favourite ("Criminal, with contempt I look on thee, proud not to find thy feeling in my breast!"), the man the autocracy. As he could find in Russian History no struggles for freedom, he sought them among the Cossacks in their struggles against the Poles, and was the first of his countrymen to glorify the Khmelnitskys, Naleváikos, and Voynarovskys: soon Púshkin was to follow him on these subjects. Thus he became the first didactic poet of modern times. It was in prison, within sight of imminent death, that the Russian nature broke through with him also: the haughty resistance to tyrants was now replaced by deep, true, and religious humility and patient resignation; he does not fear death, he forgives and prays for all—even his enemies. The poems of his last days in prison, even the last before his execution (July 14, 1826), breathe the same spirit: "Oh! happy he who gaily receives the cup of suffering: over the sea of torments, the floods of tears, Christ will lead him as He did Peter: pure in heart, righteous in soul, he is sainted even in life, and beholds, like Moses, the Promised Land." His *Nunc dimittis*, when the gallows was already erected, affects us powerfully: "Contend not with Thy servant, forgive me my sins, O Lord; set swiftly free the spirit from the body." On his fellow-prisoners his verses worked like a gospel, a new revelation.

In close relations with the Decembrists stood also the author of the witty comedy, "Góre ot Umá," or "Wit comes to grief," A. Griboêdov. Up to to-day Russian dramatic literature has produced nothing to throw into the shade this classical comedy, which may bear comparison with the "Figaro" of Beaumarchais.

Griboêdov was brought up even more exclusively in the pseudo-classical traditions than Rylêev, say, or Bátyushkov: even his early and great infatuation for the theatre was sure to keep him under the spell of those traditions. Theatre-mania was a special characteristic of old Russian society: where there were no sort of social or political interests the world of the boards, the intrigues for or against Mlle. Semyónov, Ózerov,

and others claimed the deepest sympathy. Landowners even forcibly recruited theatrical companies from their serfs, and kept them on their estates or at Moscow, and ruined themselves by this hobby. Into the circle of these patrons of the theatre and writers for the stage Griboêdov got himself introduced; Prince Shakhovskóy, the untiring purveyor of pieces for the day's use—comic, satiric, lyrical, romantic operas, ballets, &c.; Zagóskin, who later took for his hobby the historical novel; Khmelnitsky, mainly a translator who so fostered the Vaudeville; Katénin, who once again imitated and translated Corneille and Racine, so often imitated and translated; and Gendre—they all belonged to the most intimate circle of Griboêdov's friends, he writing or rehearsing pieces with them. Yet that seemed at bottom harmless playing: Shakhovskóy and the rest, who really gave themselves wholly to the passion for the theatre and lived only for the stage, scarcely took seriously the Freemason, the Foreign Office official, whose duties were always calling him to the Caucasus, to Tiflis or Teheran, where indeed he was on January 30, 1829, murdered, though Minister Plenipotentiary, by the populace that had been stirred up against him. In quietude, away from the whirl of the stage, his comedy ripened; it had nothing in common with what he had performed, alone or with others (Gendre, &c.); he is said to have first conceived the plot as early as 1816. Not till 1823–4 did he read out some scenes, and caused a *furore* in St. Petersburg literary circles: then began the circulation in manuscript there and at Moscow: in 1825 Bulgárin printed two specimens in his Almanac, the "Russian Thalia," which just then was exceptionally the fashion, having to take the place of literary magazines. Apart from this all attempts of Griboêdov to get his work into print or on the stage remained fruitless: no sacrifice was of use. Only the work itself seems to have suffered badly from it; at least, the author writes: "The first rough sketch of this scenic poem as it was conceived by me was considerably more majestic and of greater dignity than it is now in the rich garments in which I have been forced to garb it. A childish delight in hearing my verses from the stage, the desire for success, caused me to ruin my creation as far as

might be." The comedy circulated in thousands of MS. copies: its witty retorts were already in everybody's mouth when it appeared on the stage, mutilated, in 1831, and in print still more mutilated in 1833. The sentences were often quite unintelligible: not till thirty years later was a reasonable text printed.

Written in Iambics of varying length like Krylóv's Fables, it respected the "Unities" according to the pseudo-classical recipe, single action within the space of one day on one spot, for it is only the rooms that change in the house of Fámusov. The plot is as simple as possible: After three years' absence abroad Chatsky hastens on the wings of longing and love back to Moscow, to his Sophia Fámusov. But Sophia has long since fallen ardently in love with a man quite unworthy of her, her father's secretary, Molchálin, who makes believe to return it, although all he cares about is gaining help for his own advancement, which even makes him, like a well-known hero of Nóvikov's satire, flatter the porter's dog at Fámusov's house.

Chatsky perceives Sophia's estrangement from him, seeks jealously for the object of her affections, and at length on that very day tears the secret from her. With a bleeding heart, disappointed and embittered at being sacrificed to a paltry blockhead, he leaves his uncle's house: Sophia, too, is left deserted, as Molchálin's indifference and calculation are exposed. Only the absence of a happy ending seems to differentiate this comedy from numerous French farces of the kind.

In reality it is a question of something quite different, of an "Attack upon Moscow," and its "Pillars of Society." The breakdown, the shortcoming of Russian satire and comedy, von Vízin and the old didactic magazines included, consisted in its breaking in open doors, only concerning itself with matters that had long since been consigned to well-merited laughter, and hanging only the lesser thieves, as with Sumarókov and Kapnist, while it left the great ones unmolested. Griboêdov dealt a crushing blow at the high society of Moscow; for Chatsky, made nervous by the discomforts of the voyage and

increasingly bitter disappointment, spares with his sarcastic observations neither old nor young: works himself up in his long "Monologues" (so the Russians call tirades not interrupted by replies) to tear off the masks, and is bravely seconded by the whole society, as we see it assembled in the forenoon in Fámusov's reception-room and in the evening in his ball-room: the cream of Moscow, princes, senators, colonels, &c., are introduced and the tradition of Catherine's time put in the pillory. The fact is that, properly speaking, it was a time that was already vanishing which, at the last moment, Griboêdov's dramatic lens caught: soon all these figures were to belong to history. But not one of them was imaginary: the public was attracted or repelled by the fidelity of this gallery of portraits of ancestors and contemporaries. Griboêdov did not caricature definite personalities on the stage: he only borrowed from individuals the principal traits of his characters; hence even contemporary interpretation might often be at a loss for whom Skalozúb (Grinner), Molchálin (the Silent: the names are still partly labels in the old French fashion), or Repetilov (the Prater) were exactly meant. Fámusov was the poet's own uncle, Alexis Griboêdov, famous for the entertainments that he gave. The old venomous Khlestóv woman Tolstoy brought in again in "Peace and War." Mercilessly did Griboêdov unveil the nothingness and moral cankeredness, nay rottenness, of these pillars of the State and of society. Their only standard for the estimation of a man is the Court Guide, the number of his "souls," *i.e.*, male serfs—for women and children did not count as "souls"—and the number of his orders and titles: they bow down to the favourite and despise him when fallen. Pride and manly dignity are unknown qualities: people receive the most disreputable man without hesitation if he only shows himself useful or obliging; influence and connections replace everything; mental interests are limited to abusing Progress and the Voltairians, to malicious scandal and slander. Nothing is too absurd to be at once believed and repeated, like the fable of Chatsky's madness which the infuriated Sophia puts in circulation. They pass their time in amusements and playing cards, and those who do not content

themselves with these dilate at the club on the Constitution or set on foot special societies, where they bamboozle themselves and others with misunderstood watchwords, political or philosophical. Griboêdov was accused of denouncing the Decembrists, which fell to the ground, for this reason, that Moscow, not St. Petersburg, was the scene of action. The women, still more empty-headed than their husbands, think of nothing but fashions, balls, and French books, and devote themselves to the imitation of everything foreign. In this they to some extent follow the men, and some of the severest tirades of Chatsky are directed against it. "Let us at least adopt from the Chinese their aversion to strangers, so that our good sage people (*i.e.*, the common folk) may not take us for Germans." Liberals found fault with Griboêdov for these sallies, which, they said, stamped him as an opponent of Western Europe, but he shared this aversion with the best men of his day, Rylêev and others: all the Decembrists hated the Germans, Russian or otherwise, the most trusty instruments of Autocracy, so bitterly that their Moscow emissaries would not initiate Prince Vyázemsky into the plot simply because his hatred did not seem genuine enough, though almost at the same time he wrote of Russia: "Once a colony of the Varangs, to-day a Germany colony; capitals Petersburg and Sarepta;[1] business conducted in German, upper classes speak French, but the money is Russian; Russian language and hands are only meant for dirty work." And in the famous stanzas of "The Russian God" (1827) we have: "God of mines and snowstorms, of sleeping-places without beds, God of the cold and the poor, of all beggars far and wide, God of estates without revenues, of all Orders round the neck, of footmen without boots, of foreign interlopers, and especially God of the Germans—that is he, that is the God of the Russians." And Vyázemsky has nothing in common with Slavophilism or Reaction: his hatred of aliens, like that of Chatsky and the Decembrists, was only the just indignation of a patriot. Hence accusations against or suspectings of Griboêdov are groundless: how he sympathised with the Decembrists we know, and also how he luckily evaded the

[1] The chief of the German settlements on the Volga.

noose of the trials: that in his comedy he told them all the truth, who could blame him for that?

Of its value and significance a contemporary, the Decembrist Bestúzhev, an acute critic, speaks thus in the "Polar Star," that excellent Almanac of the Muses, published in conjunction with Rylêev: "M. Griboêdov's manuscript comedy is a phenomenon such as we have not had the luck to see since von Vízin's 'Minor.' The crowd of boldly and sharply drawn characters, the vivid picture of Moscow customs, feeling in the pathetic passages, intelligence and wit in the speeches, a hitherto unknown facility and the naturalness of our society diction in the verses—all this carries us away and chains our attention. A man of susceptibility will not read it through without laughing and at the same time being moved to tears. People who are in the habit even of amusing themselves only according to the French system or are displeased by the plastic weaving of the scenes declare that it twines no knot, that the author does not try to please according to rule. Let them talk as they will, prejudices will be dissipated and the future will duly appreciate this comedy and place it among the first of national creations." Bestúzhev's prognostications have come true: the prejudices, nay suspicions, the vacillation in judgment of a Púshkin and a Bêlinsky, have been brushed aside; even without the brilliant Essay of Goncharóv, the crowning work of Russian comedy has been recognised as such. In the first place, the diction of it was masterly; to carry the Moscow dialect direct from drawing-room and ante-chamber on to the stage was what no one had thought of before. Even those who were well disposed to the poet were struck first of all by the strangeness of it and made objections to the "realistic" language: the verse itself was crystal smooth and flowed without any check. The numerous witty, caustic, or ironical observations have long since become common property, simply proverbial, and the characters types. The mere mention of it brings before us the picture of the martinet who knows nothing in the world beside duty and promotion; of the senator who signs

documents without going through them; the flunkeylike official to whom an opinion of his own seems insubordination, and who boasts only two talents, punctuality and temperance; their names have long since become generic. The plot, although not striking, is logically worked out, the dialogue handled in masterly fashion. People objected without reason to the tirades of Chatsky, the place, the time, and the people before whom he delivers them. His hearers all leave the speaker until he is alone. The characters are depicted with the utmost clearness even in the case of personages of the third rank. Only with regard to Chatsky people could not quite make up their minds. Is he only a maker of phrases? Is it the poet himself, or how far does the poet identify himself with him? To be sure Chatsky is as yet no man of action, but his words start a propaganda, rouse men's minds out of their sloth, and can certainly not be dismissed with the remark that he is a mere hero of phrases. People even wanted in face of the patent intentions of the author to twist him about into a comical figure, so unpleasant were the truths that he cast in the teeth of both friend and foe. In the hero, full of feeling and sentiment, whom his unstable, cowardly and venal, ignorant and arrogant, vain and servile surroundings have changed from a "Misanthrope" into an Alceste, there is a fair share of the author himself. We know his acute judgments, *e.g.*, concerning the literary "rabble" at St. Petersburg, just as if we heard Tolstoy talking on the same subject half a century later, or touching Russia's "Mission of civilisation" in the East—to wit, the struggle between the freedom of the mountains and the woods, with the civilisation of the drum and the effect of rockets: "We hang and forgive and spit on History," or what he says about the Russian "spirit of destruction." Púshkin reports creditably as to his bitterness. Thus the poet through his Chatsky flung his gauntlet in the face of society and gave the word to the Russian "Literature of Abuses" in general, and embodied in Chatsky the spirit of protest which, especially after the

December days of 1825, when every one was kowtowing and cowering, was all the more remarkable.

But Chatsky is not merely an Alceste or a Figaro: as with Bátyushkov and Rylêev, the author already shows symptoms of the progress of Romanticism, not merely in Byronising and world-weary sentiments. Poetry which he wished to make the object of his life ("I love it madly, passionately") spoke to him from the grand scenery of the Caucasus, from the patriarchal customs and desperate struggles of the mountain races; but the tragedy he planned, "A Night in Georgia," was never carried out. Griboêdov was a man of "Storm and Stress" in life as in literature; for calm, epic contemplation like Púshkin's, or sentimental melancholy like Zhukovsky's, he, with his fighting and protesting nature, was quite unsuited. How everything moved him! such as the torment of being a burning dreamer in a land of eternal snow: "It pierces right to the bones, the coldness, the indifference to people of talent; most indifferent of all are our Sirdars; I even believe they hate such people." The Invasion of 1812 gives him too the subject for a dramatical work. The principal character in this is a serf who performs heroic actions and earns in the end ingratitude and indifference for it, and returns to his native village and the rods of his master. Despair at this drives him to suicide.

Griboêdov's sudden and early death put an end to everything. Nothing remained but the one comedy which, quite isolated like a precipitous cone in a plain, has neither forerunners nor offshoots either in the author's own works, which we can hardly bring into the count, or in literature generally. It alone successfully claimed the interest of the public, which else was given entirely to Púshkin and his "Onêgin." In Griboêdov Pushkin lost his only really dangerous rival, though he for a moment suspected one in Rylêev. Or would it have fallen out otherwise? Would he, too, in his love of action and ambition, which the inglorious part of the literary man in Russia could never satisfy, have become faithless to literature? Idle questions—and yet we believe we should hint at this possibility.

We have reached a turning point in Russian literature, which is not contented with serving as "sweetmeats and fruit at a dinner" or "refreshing lemonade in summer-time." Radíshchev's journey, Rylêev's so-called ballads, Griboêdov's comedy, were social events; they might be removed from the haunts of men, yet they still remained the stormy petrels of a different life, of a totally altered conception of literature, even when they led only to an unsuccessful street riot. Thus St. Petersburg literature was the logical outcome of French advanced thought.

That of Moscow, for which the arising of a sentimental "Teutono-Rossian," Karamzín, had been decisive, assumed a different attitude. True, Karamzín himself soon undeceived his contemporaries, and for ever. While it rained numberless imitations of his sentimental "Journey" and his still more sentimental "Poor Liza"—*e.g.*, "Poor Masha," and "Ruined Henriette," and "Unfortunate Margaret," and so on through all the female Christian names—while even Comedy took the field, especially against the "discreet" writer for ladies, Prince Shálikov,[1] he himself turned his back on all sentimentality and, giving up the *rôle* of an editor and writer of elegant literature, leaving even the interesting autobiographical novel "A Knight of Our Days" unfinished, turned historian. By 1816 the first eight volumes of his "History of the Russian Dominion" were completed; they appeared in 1818, and there followed between then and 1824 (in 1826 he died) the ninth and tenth volumes down to the accession of the

[1] He was ridiculed by Prince Shakovskóy in his one-act piece "The New Sterne" (1805). The servant laments over his master: "You lachrymose writers, you plaintive authors, have done my good master to death," and asks, "Where did this sentimental devilry come to us from?" He learns that it was shaped in England, spoiled in France, swollen up in Germany, and came to Russia in the most lamentable condition. The Karamzinists did not forgive him these and similar outbursts, and attacked Shutovskoy (from *shût* = buffoon, jester) as much for his mock-heroic epics which Shishkóv's "Lectures" adorned as for his comedies, but without being able to shake his popularity. The very name "Arzamás" arose out of this controversy.

Romanovs. It was the first gigantic success of a prose work; in a few weeks the edition was caught up. As Columbus revealed America, so Karamzín revealed to the Russians their history, according to a famous simile of Púshkin's. He showed how attractively that dull and monotonous story could be told. The art of the stylist in it perhaps excelled that of the historic inquirer. For just as Karamzín in his political writings is much more man of letters than statesman, so it is also with his History: only in the notes did the inquirer after truth betray himself. Throughout the text was kept up unswervingly the solemn tone of an epic poet and unquestioning worshipper of Autocracy, who piously traced it in times which had not the slightest conception of a Russian State. This was the great prejudice of Karamzín—which was indicated in an obvious way in the title of his work—which incited the young men such as Púshkin to epigrams and parodies, *e.g.*, a reproduction of Livy in Karamzín's manner. But Liberal opposition and the learned pedantry of Kachenóvsky soon grew silent; the book was regarded as a revelation. On it Púshkin modelled his drama, Zagóskin his novel; to dispute his authority seemed an impertinence; when the tradesman's son Polevóy ventured to write a "History of the Russian People" in opposition to his "History of the Russian Dominion" and the conscientious pedant Ustryálov found some fault with the great work. Otherwise honourable, enlightened, and liberal men, in a rigmarole which is past a European's understanding, formally announced before the Minister Uvárov their project of shaking Karamzín's authority.

Seventy years before Kutúzov had denounced his works to the Minister of Education on the ground of their freethinking and Jacobinical poison, of their proclaiming atheism and anarchy, in order that he might be displayed before the Emperor in all his repulsive nakedness as the enemy of God and the instrument of darkness. Thus the subject of denunciation changed, only the act itself has remained the one thing invariable in the flight of Russian events: denunciation

in prose and verse, against friend and foe, before the Third Section and the public, that which hit the mark and that which glanced past, the poisonous, sober kind and the stupid, besotted—this very delicate but dreadfully longlived subject Russian Literature has down to to-day always evaded, except as far as it has been suggested or sketched by Shchedrín.

Karamzín himself had, after stripping off all sentimentality, only shown to the world the High Tory and Arch-reactionary. Speransky's "New Russia," all reforms in legislation, even in the demanding general culture as a qualification for an official career, the decision as to examinations of 1809, and now finally in the question of serfdom, seemed to him audacious undermining—a crime against Russia. Therefore he condemned even Peter's reforms, if only because of their rapidity and their abrupt rupture with sacred traditions. But this he only did before the Emperor, as if to scare him from doing the like. Before the great public he only admitted the absolute impossibility of leaving the work of reform short of its logical conclusion, and refusing openly to acknowledge the finality of the separation from old Russia. Such contradictions are not infrequent with him; they did not disturb his contemporaries because for the most part they remained concealed from them. His personality had a powerful effect—his love of independence, which resisted all allurements; the openness with which he maintained his opinion even before the Emperor (to be sure the Emperor's sister covered his rear), which made people see in him the great and unswerving patriot (yet the poets at least saw patriots also in Volynsky and Derzhávin); his calm, assured nature which made him avoid all personal allusions or controversy; added to these his tact, his knowledge, his humane spirit, and the glimmer of sentimentality which he always kept. There were people, like Zhukovsky, who regularly worshipped him and made "Karamzín" a religion; people do not hesitate to characterise the period from 1790 to 1820 as Karamzín's. This is hardly correct, for he rather closes an old period than ushers in a new one. Just as in his "History" he regularly reproduced Tatíshchev and Bóltin, Shcherbátov and Schlösser, only

outdoing them by his skill in depicting, not in the collecting and working up of material, nor in general points of view, so he conquered no new provinces even for elegant literature, and is no creator of new matter. In spite of all sentimentality his "Reform" is mainly an external one, dealing with style and language, notably in prose: for his historical manner he draws from the well of the old Chronicles exceptional enlivenment.

The real representative of the sentimental, æsthetical tendency in literature was first found in his young protégé and friend Zhukovsky, the most Germanophil of Russian poets; no arch-romanticist as he has often been labelled, but a dreamer and a thinker. His dreaming and thinking, however, were no poetical mask, but the real mirror of a rarely pure soul. Absolutely unselfish, ready to renounce and sacrifice everything for others, to mitigate their misfortunes (the Decembrists), to avert their dangers (as with Púshkin), and for his friends (Voêykov, who repaid him but ill, Gógol, and others), himself unpretending, modest, gentle, chaste—thus did he move through life. No energetic nature, it is true, he was not formed for fighting; in vain did his friends seek to stir in him the vein of a social poet and then dread for him the enticements of the Court; the epigrams coined thereupon did not wound him. He remained ever conscious of the purity of his intentions. This want of energy brands his imaginative writing also, which is simply imitative. He is the most highly esteemed translator in the Literature, from Gray's "Elegy" in 1802 to the "Odyssey" in 1848. One main theme runs through all these creations and translations, in their choice and in their interpretation—the theme of renunciation and resignation such as his own experience of life instilled.

Búnin Zhukovsky, in whose veins Oriental blood flowed, was at Moscow brought into touch with German and English poetry by his school friends the sons of the Freemason Turgénev. It was a circle of cultivated, high-striving, idealistic young men: Andrew, the bosom friend of Zhukovsky, died early; Nicholas went into exile because of his Liberal opinions; Alexander did not share the fate of his brother though

he held his opinions. They all took a lively interest in literature, and Zhukovsky's first attempts went back to his boyhood. To a wider circle his name became known by his imitation of Gray's "Elegy"; by his "Bard's Song at the Grave of Victorious Slavs" (1806, to celebrate Austerlitz), a rhetorical patriotic ode, and by his "Ludmíla," the first Russian ballad, copied from Bürger's "Leonore," which was simply of epoch-making significance to the Slav literatures. Not only in Russian was it the first to wake a long array of skeletons and dances of death, screech-owls, and all sorts of spectres; for Kámenev's "ballad," "Gromvál" (1803), is as little a ballad as, say, Mrs. Radcliffe's gruesome romances are romantic. Thus did Zhukovsky evolve full-blown all Russian devils, witches, and ghostly apparitions. The fame of the "Balladkin" was enhanced by prose stories like "Mariana's Grove," insufferably namby-pamby to us but enchanting to his contemporaries, bitter earnest to the poet; for his Usláv, the singer of primeval times who mourns by the bier of his Mariana, was Zhukovsky himself in deep sorrow for his Másha.

Expecting little of life, he devoted himself exclusively to poetry, convinced that in thus serving all that was noble and good he discharged a high social duty. His ideal was Schiller, not Goethe; he did not go back to Bürger again, but to Uhland and Hebbel, by whom he put later Herder's "Cid" and Fouqué's "Undine," and still later Halm's "Camoens." Schiller's Ballads and Greek Songs, as also the "Maid of Orleans," are among the triumphs of his art as a translator. Conscientiously as in his renderings he tried to adhere to the original, we often come upon intentional alterations which gave the whole that ideally fantastic, dreamily elegiac tone which is his own. He recast the poems till they were his. That was how he proceeded with "Ludmíla," whom he garbed in the Russian *sarafán*. Thus he drew from the novel of Spiess his subject, which, however, he materially recast in his "Twelve Sleeping Maids"; the Gromobóy of the first part (1810) sells his soul to Asmodeus, who entraps him and sacrifices to him instead of his own the souls of his twelve virgin daughters, who await in deep sleep

their deliverance. In the second part (1817) this is achieved by Vadím, whom an inexplicable longing ("What to seek and where? To what direct my desire?") drives out into the world. The poet weeded out sensual episodes and plunged the whole in a purposely dim light which does not allow us to distinguish the outlines clearly. In these epical attempts and in the ballad of "Svetlana," as a pendant to the "Ludmíla," we find the only concessions to Russian antiquity—*i.e.*, to the Utopias that people made of them, a mixture of pagan and classical mythology and troubadourism which the "Livy of the North" was to be the first to dissipate. His contemporaries expected with certainty of Zhukovsky such a Russian heroic epic: he set to work several times on a "Vladímir" and the Heroes of a Round Table, but never got farther than the first drafts—not only because the vision of the ages was lacking to him in spite of his "Livy," but above all because he was no epic, always only a lyric, poet.

His greatest poetical success he achieved with a very questionable performance which years later was no longer to satisfy himself. If the "Bard's Song" of 1806 was couched in the conventional style, by 1812 he himself had taken his place among the defenders of his country and had brought back with him from the campaign the "Singer in the Camp of the Russian Warriors." This heroic Ode, though much too long, was received with enthusiasm everywhere, from the Court downwards; all that was really poetical in it were some sentimental tirades and a heaping up of effective antitheses. All else was conventional, from the singer Bayán, the delight of years gone by, who with his harp sped in arms before the ranks of the Slavs, and poured forth the sacred hymn, and the helms and shields to the daring defiance, "Seek, O enemy, to tear from us the shield which the hand of our beloved gave, on which gleams a sacred vow, 'Thine even beyond the grave.'" Still more frigid and rhetorical was the following ode, "The Singer in the Kremlin," for the anniversary of the "Expulsion of the Gauls and twenty Tribes," but both brought the poet nearer to the Court, where he became first teacher of Russian to a German Grand Duchess and then tutor to

the Cesarévich Alexander II. Nor did the years 1812 and 1813 awaken any more potent echo elsewhere ; things did not get further than the official lyrics of a Derzhávin ; not even the guerilla Davýdov brought any variation into this paper or tinfoil poetry.

It was only for the time being, as he did again in 1831 in rivalry with Pushkin, that Zhukovsky performed this lyrical *corvée*, into which nevertheless he managed to smuggle small particles of himself—for instance, in the closing verses of the "Kremlin" the allusion to what is beyond and the rising once more of what the hour of death has torn from us. Other poems far more amply expressed his nature, such as "Theon and Æschines," where Theon proclaims to the latter, only disappointed by life and its gifts, Zhukovsky's philosophy : "Not in swift pleasure, not in deceitful dreaming, did I see earthly happiness. What Fate can in a moment destroy, that is not ours in this world ; the imperishable treasure of the heart, Love, the sweetness of lofty thoughts, that is happiness . . . To the heart only, what has passed away is eternal"—the thought most often quoted and expatiated on by him. "Sorrow at parting is also a way of love : over the heart loss has no power. Is not mourning for what is lost the promise of infallible hope, that in a known but mysterious country our loss will be made good to us ?" This belief the grown-up child retained for ever ; in the course of years his religiousness waxed stronger, the mystic vapour grew thicker.

His power of poetical invention often ceased for whole years ; friends and disciples like Pushkin hoped for a new life for the poet, but his unaccustomed duty, taken in earnest in an exceptional way—in Alexander's mind he implanted for ever humane impulses—claimed all his powers ; he did not rise above occasional poems, and dallyings in verse, and even his activity as a translator came to a stop. Not until his service at Court was ended and he was his own man again did he become, in spite of his advanced years, more active, his imitations increased in number, notably his "Nala and Damayanti," which is far more poetical than Rückert's original, and he braced himself to translating the Odyssey.

The spirit of antiquity has always remained alien to Russia. In the Middle Ages, down to Peter the Great, it scarcely knew the ancient world by name; the Kievans brought from the Polish schools Latin and the Classics, yet this remained wholly fruitless; with but few exceptions, the lettered knew the Classics only from French travesties. People, moreover, were often averse to them; when Karamzín wanted to insert in his "Pantheon of Foreign Literature" some speeches of Demosthenes the Censorship forbade it "because Demosthenes was a Republican, as were Cicero and Sallust, and such people should not be translated." The same point of view was still put forward after 1848, people complaining particularly of instruction in ancient history, saying that one ought to start from the point of view that it was only as a punishment for their heathenism that God refused the Greeks and Romans appreciation and receptivity for the benefits of Autocracy. Not till the study of the classical writers had lost all object and only maintained itself in Europe as a tradition, which has become more obstinate in proportion as it has lost its ground of utility, was it, thanks to the triumvirate D. Tolstoy, Katkóv, and Leóntiev, included in the most comprehensive way in the curriculum with the express object of stupefying the young and making studies more difficult. The object of the reactionaries and renegades has, indeed, been brilliantly achieved; nowhere in the world is classical study at once so hated and so unprofitable as in the least classical of all countries, Holy Russia; the scholars to teach it had to be imported, like bandsmen, mainly from Bohemia; a native scholar of repute Russia has not produced, with the exception of Zielinski.

Qualified connoisseurs of the antique for a long period there were none, the first, one may say, being the two Muravióvs—one Michael, tutor of the Grand Dukes and Curator of Moscow University, a meritorious nobleman, father of those Muravióvs who did not hang but were hanged (the two Decembrists), the "Fénelon" of Bátyushkov and patron of Karamzin, one of the most enlightened men of the day, who died in 1807; the other Ivàn Muravióv-Apostol, a butt for the gibes of Prince Gorchakóv and Pushkin as the "new Locke"

for his "Letters on Classical Training," translator of Horace and the "Clouds" of Aristophanes, author of an adaptation of Sheridan's "School for Scandal," erroneously ascribed to Alexander, of a comedy in the style of von Vízin's "Minor," and of "Letters on a Journey in Tauris," exposing the hypocritical blockhead to whom the antique seemed blasphemous; he did not die till 1851. To the recommendations of the older Muravióv Martýnov also owed much, a meritorious teacher, who also made a name for himself as a translator from Greek, the knowledge of which he brought with him from the Poltáva Seminary, but his translations and those of Merzlakóv, the Moscow Professor of Literature, are still stiff and awkward. Both are outdone by Gnêdich, an agreeable poet, in his own elegies, mostly modelled on the antique; he was the first of the Russians to penetrate into Homer's magic world. The fruit of many years' labour was the translation of the "Iliad," begun in Alexandrines, but at Uvárov's urgent instances carried out in hexameters; it made no impression at all on the Russian public, impervious like everything Slavonic to the truly classic; you cannot deny it precision and force, but it lacked naturalness; the solemnity, *i.e.*, forcedness of the diction, was arrived at by superfluous "Slavisms" and obsolete constructions; not for a moment can you get rid of the feeling that you have only a translation before you.

It was otherwise with Zhukóvsky's "Odyssey," which appeared in 1848 and 1850. When he had put into the quiet haven of family life for his declining years, the "choice spirit" grew to hate "the modern, convulsive, hysterical, sense-confusing poetry" of a Herwegh and his satellites, the spirit which stood unsympathising and uncomprehending in face of social and political conflicts, with its childlike faith and its deliberate subordination of understanding and will to grace and providence; in return it was powerfully drawn towards the primitive pastoral poetry of the Bible and Homer, "which brightly and gently cheers and calms, peacefully beautifies all that surrounds us, and neither troubles us nor draws us away into misty distances. Homer's Muse gilded the hours of my declining

life." Even in the "Odyssey" Zhukóvsky remained true to himself. Truly did Varnhagen say of it: "The effect of this translation comes very near to that of the original; the same charm of language, the same simplicity and clearness, the same epic flow and sonorousness of the hexameter. The poet has reproduced the Ionian charm and brilliancy in Scythian sounds, which, indeed, are more akin to the Hellenic than one commonly thinks." The inestimable qualifications of Russian for such rendering Zhukóvsky's genius has used with the greatest success: his mastery of the art of verse handled the alien form with the happiest grace. At bottom, however, it is Zhukóvsky's "Odyssey," not Homer's: for all the fidelity and literalness the keynote is different; a sentimental and didactic strain has been brought in by the translator, who managed in the same way to soften down the complaint of Byron's "Prisoner of Chillon." And with all his simplicity and smoothness the translator could not escape obsolete and inconvenient forms and words. Like Gnêdich, he met with only a cool and indifferent reception.

In any case he remains the most original translator in the world's literature; what other translator made whatever foreign work he touched into his own mental property by mere omission of some traits and emphasising of others? Translations became adaptations, and in these he showed himself an unrivalled master. His merits, then, lay in the final deliverance of Russian literature from the exclusive French spell; no other like him enlarged its scope by an abundance of masterpieces, especially from German and English literature; like child's play he overcame the difficulties of versification and language; for this Pushkín particularly admired him. Russian poetical diction attained through him a far higher perfection than that of prose through Karamzin. This backwardness of prose was again specially felt by Pushkín. What attracts us in Zhukóvsky is the sincerity of his tone, the genuineness of his sentiment; we do not share his flight from the world, his consolings of himself with what is beyond, or his resignation, but we honour them, for they came from his heart and were not cunningly devised or affected.

Bátyushkov and he, though radically opposed—the one the Classic of palpably plastic expression, the singer of sensuous enjoyment of life, the imitator of the Anthology and Horace, the other a sentimental Romanticist who purposely used mysterious, merely indicative, and often wholly vanishing lines—simply exhausted the range of purely imitative, unoriginal Russian poetry; any progress in these paths was scarcely possible for the future. They had perfected the vehicle of poetical speech and attained the highest technical accomplishment in the most various forms of verse; they made everything ready for their pupil who was to outdo them.

Russian artistic Prose was not even in this stage of preparation. In true Art before the æsthetic tribunal it was not recognised at all, because Laharpe and Batteux knew nothing of it. Attempts at historical drama in prose did not find their way on to the stage. To be sure, the novel, as in Catherine's day, was already the favourite means of killing spare time, which Krylóv notably applied with such success, but this rabid desire for reading was still appeased only by translations. Only one man followed in the steps of Izmaílov—the Little Russian, Narêzhny. Literary circles, indeed, took no notice of him, but he found access to the public. He tried his hand at various *genres*, beginning with "Slav Evenings," epic poems in prose, which wrapped the Kiev Round Table in Ossianic mists (1809), but by 1814 he chanced upon ideally congenial material. Convinced that Russians must take more interest in the fate of a countryman than in foreigners, convinced, too, that the time for an unhampered depiction of Russian manners had already dawned, in 1814 he published the first three parts of his "Russian Gil Blas, or Adventures of Prince Chistyakóv," with three others to follow. He had reckoned without the Censorship and the Freemasons; even the beginning was forbidden, the second half was never printed. The story was very complicated: others ran side by side with Chistyakóv's experiences, but all sides of Russian life were to be represented —gentry, peasants, provincial officialdom, even a Shishkovist was held up to ridicule, while Freemasonry and its ceremonies, even its orgies, were depicted in detail. After this failure,

when the Censorship buried his best work, the "Russian Teniers" turned with better fortune from Great Russian to Little Russian; his great successor, Gógol, went the same way, only reversed. In stories and novels he depicted the typical peculiarities of the Ukraine in old times, its Paný or lords, the old nobility in their patriarchal existence, the *alumni* of their Church schools, or "Bursakí" (sizars), the rage for lawsuits, which, kindled over trifling matters, brings whole families to ruin ("The Two Ivàns"), the Cossack in his "Sich" (stockade), behind the cataracts of the Dnêpr. The historical and the humorous alternated; contemporary criticism found fault with his so-called coarsenesses; the fact is the time for realism had not yet come. Narêzhny was destined to be early forgotten, for in all the spheres which he had been the first to open up he was elbowed aside by another Little Russian, Gógol, against whose genius mere talent could not hold its own.

If in this quarter of a century, especially in Prose, so little was accomplished, it must not be forgotten that to some extent the time itself was often not very favourable to literary tastes. Let us quote on the point only one pertinent dictum. Von Stein, the Minister at Petersburg, had drawn the attention of the Emperor to the efficacy of the Press; hence the German-Russian Gréch, when in 1812 he was purposing to publish his "Son of the Fatherland" ("Syn Otéchestva"), received assistance from the Emperor himself. Gréch then planted himself on his own feet, performing single-handed on his weekly journal all the duties of editor, translator, and the like; later he was the first to issue yearly reports of Russian literature. In this he was followed first by the Almanacs, and years later by Bêlínsky. In that for 1814 we find some scientific works mentioned; of elegant literature there was only Pálitsyn's translation of De Lille's "Gardens," a couple of descriptive and didactic poems, and fables by Izmáilov and Krylóv and another; it is expressly pointed out that whereas in 1801–5 more books appeared than before that in double the time, owing to political events between 1806 and 1814 literature simply came to a standstill, while in 1812 not a single page

was written that did not bear upon the troubles of the time. The year 1814 first brought a change for the better. Gréch is delighted that in that year at St. Petersburg and Moscow only a novel apiece, translations from the German, and two historical stories appeared; he complains of the indifferent sale for solid Russian works, such as the travels of Krusenstern and Lisovsky. Complaints as to the scanty number of Russian books are constant; Pushkin exclaims, "Where are they? Just bring them here," and Bêlínsky writes on that subject still in the Report for 1841. Thus no Literature as yet could be called from the soil by stamping on it, especially since the "Sirdars" took so little interest in it. But soon their interest was to be considerably augmented—whether a real service was done to Literature thereby Pushkin would be able to inform us.

CHAPTER VI

PUSHKIN

His youth—His schoolboy verses—As an Anacreontist and epigrammatist—His banishment—As a Byronist—His epic and dramatic poetry—Result of December 14th—As a prose-writer and lyric poet—His relations with the public and the critics—Death of the poet—His place in literature.

In a soil scarcely loosened here and there by the labours of the Kievans and foreign teachers an elegant literature had been "bedded," mechanically and superficially; it had already borne fruits, few in number and of doubtful taste. Pseudo-classical literature sanctioned pure imitation, for thus the forms and the matter were settled beforehand; only the language had to be varied. That to Russians Bellona and the Graces, and the whole mythological and classical paraphernalia on which pseudo-classical literature principally lived, and through which, as was just and right, it came to grief, were totally alien was counted precisely an advantage and novelty, although in its own home it had long since been consigned to the rubbish-heap. Lomonósov's and Derzhávin's writings were exactly as Russian as bagwigs, three-cornered hats, and buckled shoes—a pure matter of fashion, a simple imitation, without any connection with country or people, their history and needs; of the most important point on which all subsequent development was to hinge, the people and its lot, this school, un-Russian, though Russian was its vehicle, knew nothing. The supremacy of it, moreover, was even in its own country, France, approaching an irrevocable

end; in Germany and England it had long been in its coffin: the obsolete fashion thus needed reviving even in Russia, and here as elsewhere the Romantic followed the Pseudo-classical. This revival proceeded almost without a struggle, like the bringing in of a new shape in hats; yet Romanticism was as exotic in Russia as Classicism. Moreover people did not properly understand the conflict, either at home or abroad. They contented themselves with mere externals; to one "Romantic" meant emancipation from the accepted principles, the three unities and verse in the drama, and not observing "rules"; another confused Romanticism with fantastical scenery, with *diablerie* and ghosts, with legends and fairy stories; to a third it was all that belonged to the Middle Ages, *i.e.*, totally alien to Russia, which had passed through no such a period like the rest of Europe. Others again saw in it the letting loose of the passions, the letting itself go of the Ego in protest against the yoke of social or even moral rules, a conflict with them, discontent and bitterness: others were caught by the historical, the national side, "local colour," only that they sought it rather in the "romantic" scenes of Finland or the Caucasus, or the wild, patriarchal life of the East, of gipsies and bandits, than at home in the ever more barrack-like uniformity of Great Russian regulated life. The more they talked of Romanticism the more confused grew the conceptions of it; at bottom it remained just as exotic, as artificially "transplanted," as Classicism, but it meant a considerable advance towards the ultimate deliverance from constant mental tutelage: it brought them a good deal nearer to the longed-for national Literature, although it was only adopted as a new European fashion: even in that was proclaimed the now unseverable connection of Russia with Europe.

If romantic elements, though still mostly German, had proclaimed themselves in Zhukóvsky, it became Pushkin's merit not only to have helped the new tendency to a speedy and final victory, but to have paved the way successfully to the highest goal, the creation of a national Literature.

He was born on May 26, 1799, at Moscow, of an old noble family, to which the Russian Byron always referred with

pride: it was the greatest satisfaction to him to be able to include his ancestor in his dramatic narrative of Godunóv. As with Zhukóvsky, on the mother's side Eastern blood flowed in his veins; from Peter the Great's negro Hannibal he had at least externally inherited certain racial peculiarities. His parents and his uncle Basil, the inveterate Classicist, in spite of his antagonism to the "Slavophil" Shishkóv and his belonging to the "Arzamas," were people in good society, lived carelessly for their pleasures, played havoc with their estates, and troubled themselves not at all with the bringing up of their children. To Russian nurses, notably the famous Rodiónovna, Pushkin owed his store of Russian fairy stories, being otherwise left to French tutors, according to the old routine in which Lopukhín was brought up, who learned to read and write Russian from the manservant, his French from a Savoyard who had never penetrated the mysteries of orthography, and German from a Berliner who, like Frederick the Great, despised everything German and made his pupil learn only French. The child seemed somewhat backward in his development until an extraordinary passion for reading awoke in him, which he could satisfy in his father's library as he pleased—no one troubled himself about it. True, that library was not the best suited for a child, for in the fashion of the eighteenth century it was exclusively French, comprised a "Bibliothèque amoureuse," "Galanteries de la Bible," and the writings of the Encyclopædists, notably Voltaire. Pushkin suffered for years from the effects of this reading, though there he acquired that mastery of the French language which gained him at the Lyceum the sobriquet of "Frenchman" and the mockery of his school-fellows at his bad Russian. Here he imbibed his blind admiration of Voltaire, whom even in 1815 he placed above everything in the world: "A poet, the first among poets, reared by Apollo, he was from childhood my poet; more read than any, less wearisome than any, this rival of Euripides, the tender friend of Erato, heir of Ariosto and Tasso, even father of Candide, he is everything, great in every way, this unique old man." Here his fondness for the obscene began. After the fashion of the day he had to be sent to a

privileged institution: as once upon a time the old Turgénev brought Karamzín to the Moscow Freemasons, so his son Alexander caused the young Pushkin to enter the recently (1781) opened Lyceum of Tsárskoe Seló.

The Lyceum was intended for the young of the higher classes and planned as a model institution. For the moment there reigned a model disorder which, however, insured the Lyceans much freedom of action, and particularly offered no hindrance to their early awakened literary inclinations. The six years that Pushkin spent there were to be decisive for him; the remembrance of that time, of his friends and the masters—Marat's brother taught French, the Russian teacher was Pushkin's "Aristarch," a somewhat dry pedant of the good old school, while political sciences were in the hands of Kunítsyn, soon to be persecuted by the reactionaries—remained sacred to him throughout life, and Tsárskoe Seló his proper birthplace. Here the boy began to write poetry, at first in French, as he is said to have done at home, then in Russian; by 1814 his attempts were printed; next year he puts his name to "Recollections of Tsárskoe Seló," which when declaimed publicly secured him the blessing of Derzhávin, who was moved to tears. Of these "School Poems" the poet afterwards included a goodly number, not without alteration and especially abbreviation, in the collected edition of his works.

The chords he struck, and which years after his leaving the Lyceum (1817) continued to echo, were already of a complicated kind, not in the handling but in the subjects. Of course, with such a boy it could only be a question of imitation; Voltaire and Parny and, among the Russians, Bátyushkov, whom he rated exceptionally highly, were his models. The greater part of his output was made up of erotic and Anacreontic subjects: soon he himself confessed that Pushkin was a model of poetical sincerity, since he sung in watery verses, and while himself abstaining from the joys of wine, celebrated or abused Dorises that were only of his imagining, and wove wreaths to Friendship; but Friendship yawned and praised his sleepy verses while half asleep herself. Thus did the novice criticise himself, and depreciated all his verse-making, which

cost him great exertion, as idle fooling. "In the early morning, when all is long since awake, I write with one eye half closed my short verses" (this form predominates on the whole), "in pleasant forgetfulness, sinking my head in the pillow"; he mocked thus at his own love of versifying, "There is not yet the seal of genius in a deadly desire to babble in Rhymes," and yet his way was already marked out for him. No worldly successes entice him: "A true son of happy Graces, careless and heedless, I do not force my way among captains or crawl among assessors." He chose for his epitaph "Here sleeps the youthful philosopher, the pupil of Apollo and the Graces." He despised already the grumbling of the crowd, which does not guess that one may consort at once with Venus and the Porch, with book and with goblet, and disguise high meanings under the light veil of madcap merriment. He still declined any serious task, but at least in literature he had decided against Shishkóv and his fellows of the Non-progress, who printed epics in Nicon's style, piled up mountainous "Slavenic" odes, yelled themselves hoarse in crazy tragedies, and proclaim him an enemy of the country, a sower of vice, who, being a man of feeling, cajoles a beauty in tender tones or comes before us with saucy jesting, speaks in candid language, and does not pay homage to Russian stupidity.

Besides these Anacreontics and numerous poetical Epistles with open or concealed autobiographical references (Pushkin's Muse busies itself principally with the poet himself, who more than any other affords us insight into his life and innermost feelings), he sought also, after the manner of the day, for national themes to be lightly and playfully handled, somewhat in the manner of Ariosto. He thought to find them in Russian legends, like Zhukóvsky and others before him, first working up the Italian Bová (our Bevis), and on dropping that dealt with "Ruslán and Ludmíla" (1820). Astonishing was the simplicity of the poet and his critics: he really believed that he was putting life into "the works of days long past, traditions of far-off antiquity," while the critic Polevóy pronounced "Ruslán" "an enchanting picture of *Russian antiquity*," but likewise were

Zhukóvsky's "Twelve Maids" out of Spiess's novel, on which by the by Pushkin wrote a humorous commentary, or old Kheráskov's legend-poem "Bakhariána," "genuinely Russian." The poet was only joking and played with his subject; he wove in parodies, *e.g.*, the wooing of Naina by Fin, who studies magic arts in order to befool her until she has grown old and wrinkled and he drives her away in disgust, for which she has her revenge on his *protégé* Ruslán. Properly speaking this was not even Ariosto—it lacked the necessary irony and passion; it was French, clever and amusing fooling with strange fancies and constant digressions. And yet the public received with enthusiasm these six cantos, which, put together in the midst of St. Petersburg's diversions, bore plainly on their forehead the mark of the forced and artificial. Bogdanóvich's "Dúshenka" was overtrumped and forgotten; the poet had already set to work practically and theoretically on a complete reversal of æsthetic judgments regarding the reputed literary lights of the eighteenth century. The success was not undeserved. The attractive ease of the verse, the richness of the language, the daintiness of the pictures, the wealth of playful fancies, the daring, startling turns, were something new and unheard of on the arid, stiff, wearisome Russian Parnassus, and already his master Zhukóvsky felt himself beaten. What charms us to-day in the "Ruslán," the wonderful prologue, the poetical transfiguration of the Russian legendary world, where "Russian spirit reigns, where it smells of Russia," was first appended to the second, partly abbreviated edition of 1828: the glorious epilogue, where the poet in moving words proclaimed how over the careless singer of love and joy the clouds of an unseen storm were gathering, how friendship in the shape of Zhukóvsky and Karamzín averted the tempest by their entreaties and secured the poet his freedom—this conclusion, so moving in its truth, was also added in 1820, though no longer in the whirl of the capital but amid the seclusion of the Caucasus.

One thing more about "Ruslán" enticed the public—a truly French lasciviousness, the obvious delight with which the poet dwells on sensual pictures. This lasciviousness, descending to

pornography, was also a trait of his youthful lyrics, his Priapia, which to be sure only circulated in MS., and which did not finally cease till 1823: one accepts them willingly when they are wittily told, like "Tsar Nikíta," or when a glow of passion breathes on us, as in the sacrilegious "Gavriliáda," as compared with which "La Pucelle" remains innocuous. To be sure, the Faun of Ferney was only wanton, while African fervour seethed in Pushkin's veins. If you remember that ten or twelve years later the same Pushkin copied out and clamoured for Lives of the Saints, learned prayers by heart, and made himself familiar with the "Chetyí Minéi" (Menology),[1] this rapid transition from courtesan to devotee seems strange indeed to us, yet it is not a solitary instance, for the same was the case with Pushkin's friend Yazýkov.

Side by side with this poet, serving Bacchus and the Cyprian goddess, and turning away indifferently from the world and its cares, the public knew and deified quite another Pushkin. First at school, then on his entry into the world and on an official career in the Foreign Office, which he did not take seriously, he associated with the political youth which was prone to secret associations and people who held fast to the right of criticism, like Chaadáev. His intimate friendship with that "frondeur," whose cool sarcasms did not spare even the greatest, is for Pushkin both highly creditable and characteristic: he could change his opinions like gloves, and uttered long before Bismarck the saying, "Only blockheads never change," yet he remained true to his friends and remembered them even in the mines of Siberia. This Liberal intercourse now bore its literary fruits. As early as 1815 the boy composed a satire, loosely modelled on Juvenal's *Urbis incommoda*, called "To Licinius." The Roman toga was thrown over Russian allusions, in spite of the closing lines, "By freedom Rome grew great, by slavery was o'erthrown." His friend was called on at once to leave the wicked city that truckled to the favourites, and from the country chastise their shortcomings in Juvenal's spirit. Ever keener and more undisguised became

[1] *I.e.*, Lives of Saints and Martyrs arranged for the months, like the "Menæa" above.

his attacks : in the epistle to Chaadáev he can scarcely control himself any longer in his expectation of the moment "when Russia shall arise from her sleep, and on the ruins of Autocracy shall inscribe our names." In the temper of the eighteenth century he complained of the thick mist of prejudices : his philanthropist condemns the ruinous disgrace of ignorance and asks if he shall ever see the people unoppressed, slavery abolished at the nod of the Tsar, and the dawn of illumined freedom rise over the Fatherland. Lastly, after the example of André Chenier, and his championship of Law and Freedom, threatened alike by Autocracy and the Revolution, he despises this waiting, and after Sand's exploit celebrates in a special ode the dagger, the last requiter of shame and injustice, from which there is no escape. He drinks the health of Pestel, the chief of the conspiracy in the south—"whether we save our heads or do not"—in his anger against the tyrant. For the last time in 1827 he sent to the Decembrists in Siberia the promise of a speedy revulsion : "Your fetters shall fall, your brothers shall give you back your sword, Freedom shall joyfully greet you."

But even more dangerous than the Epistles and Odes, which carried the name of the writer all over Russia, were his epigrams, which in his hands became indeed daggers like Sand's. The epigram had hitherto mainly served the turn of literary jests, now it became a political weapon or a red-hot iron to brand the malefactor with the lilies. He spared nobody, from the two Emperors, Arakchéev, the two Ministers for Popular Enlightenment, Photius, and his own superior Count Vorontsóv, to Karamzín, whom he ridiculed for his glorification of the charms of the knout and Autocracy, and Zhukóvsky the poet promoted to be a Court flunkey. These venomous barbed stanzas infuriated those in authority, but assured the jubilant acclamation of the crowd. In many cases others' productions passed current as Pushkin's. More numerous than these political epigrams became in his later years his literary ones, in which he defended himself against his opponents : he pursued with especial hatred the renegade Pole Bulgárin, the "well-affected" and prolific writer who out

of the purest patriotism towards that country delivered Poland from a scoundrel by his defection and branded the Russians by his brotherhood : he is not Walter Scott but simply Skot (*i.e.*, a beast). The troublesome "swarm of stinging flies and gnats" in the journals were never harder hit than by his smart epigram : "Without a signature I let one fly not long since, anonymously a reviewer replied to it ; he knew me by my claws, I him by his ears." After some years he partly gave up his epigrams and sincerely regretted many of his youthful poems, which weighed on his conscience like a load. We must pronounce the younger poet in the right as against the older. His epigrams, political as well as literary against the pedant Kachenovsky, against Gréch and his "Son of the Fatherland," always hit in the right place, as also with Karamzín and Zhukóvsky, but there was a solitary exception ; they had better not have been written on the unhappy Polevóy : there aggrieved pride of gentry exclaimed against that of the bourgeois who ventured to have an opinion of his own, contrary to Molchálin's axiom.

It was only by his sympathies that Pushkin belonged to the young Liberals ; in the task of conspiracy he never had a share. He might, perhaps, have ended by falling a victim to it, and in other ways, too, the whirlpool of St. Petersburg seriously threatened all concentration on the part of the distraction-loving, light-living poet. Here Fate intervened through "that power which always wills the ill and"—alas ! but seldom, and by accident—"does the good." Siberia threatened the poet for his political poems : the influence of his friends transformed this into banishment to the south, a transfer to Odessa to the Chancery of General Ínzov, who was most lenient towards him. Here he made acquaintance with the family of the gallant hero of 1812, General Raévsky, and with his cultivated and highly gifted sons and daughters. Through them he came to know and admire Byron, and with them he revisited the Caucasus. Herewith begins a new epoch in the story of the poet, his Byronomania. French Anacreontics and graceful toying with the Graces are succeeded by dwarf epics in the style of the Briton who for some time made him mad.

The array of these poetical narratives was opened by the "Prisoner of the Caucasus," completed in 1821 and printed next year: the first indisputable success of an epic in the literature, a success not with the clique of critics, but all the more so with the public. The "local colour," the choice of the East, were Byronic, the suggestions rather than detailed descriptions, the limiting of the characters to two, and the distinguishing qualities of hero and heroine. The former had begun his fiery period of youth proud and fearless, had loved much, enjoyed, suffered, soon seen through men and the worth of faithless life, found treachery in Friendship and a senseless dream in Love; now he is fading, without rapture, without desires, the victim of his passions: he is dead to happiness, vanished is the illusion of hope, he will slowly flicker out, like smouldering fire, forgotten in desert valleys, for his weariness of the world drives him from among men into the arms of Nature. While thus pursuing new impressions he is taken prisoner by the mountain tribes. We should have expected Byron to be on the side of the champions of freedom, but this truly Russian illogicalness must be pardoned the poet. In the same way the girl is a copy of Byron's heroines, the bounden slave of her beloved; she sets him free, then flees with him and seeks death in the waves, since she can rouse no feeling in the extinct volcano. But a few years later Pushkin himself judged very slightingly of the story: "All this is feeble, crude, and immature." And yet he cherished sympathy for it: "There are verses there that came from my heart." He wished to depict "the premature old age of the spirit, the distinguishing mark of the young men of the nineteenth century," and side by side with it the magnificent mountain scenery, the interesting customs, usages and views of the Caucasians. He was the first of Russians to do this; he conquered the Caucasus for the poetry of his country. This was brought about, to be sure, somewhat abruptly and most incompletely. The poet did not take full advantage of the situation, which might else have been enriched by the introduction of more characters.

After the Caucasus he travelled about the picturesque

Crimea with its ruins of old pomp and magnificence. A legend attaching to the "Fountain of Baghchi-sarai," the palace of the old Khans, he turned to account in the poem of that name, printed in 1824. Ghiréy has erected the monument to his fair Christian slave, murdered by his previous favourite, the jealous Zaréma. Ghiréy has her drowned for it. There is no narrative; all the details are wrapped in the almost impenetrable Byronic darkness. Wonderfully is the contrast between the two women worked out, the Christian looking up to heaven from the couch of passion, chaste and bright as an angel, and Zaréma, the artless child with glowing senses, quite unconscious of her want of shame, only demanding vociferously the giving back of her Ghiréy. Ghiréy himself, the Tartar vainly billing and cooing, and the abrupt revulsion of his nature after the unattainable has been torn from him, is quite conventional. The description of the scenery is again a gem of descriptive poetry. A theme from Russian brigand-romance, "The Robber Brothers," he did not wholly complete; there remained only portions, an admirable picture of the freebooters' camp, but with it the same affectation in the hero: "Alone and surly I drag myself along; my cruel spirit is turned to stone; pity is dead in my heart."

His "Gypsies," written in 1824 and printed in 1827, again was based on direct observation: he is said to have wandered about with gypsies himself. The picture of the people and their patriarchal, careless life was unsurpassable, and at the same time the poet became clear as to the proper meaning of his Byronic type and condemned it sharply: the embittered and disappointed Aléko flies from the world and betakes himself to the children of Nature: care besets him, but his apparently appeased passions will awaken again and hurl destruction and death among the careless, quiet circle. When his Mariúla was untrue to the gipsy he brought up her Zemphíra lovingly, but when Zemphíra left Aléko he avenged himself by the death of the light-o'-love and her lover. For this the gypsy expels him from the camp, saying, "We savages have no laws, we do not torture or execute, we do not thirst after blood or groans, but we will not live with the murderer:

thou art not born for the lot of the savage, thou only claimest liberty for thyself; we are shy and good of heart, thou malevolent and daring." Thus the savage gypsy is the man, the civilised Aléko the beast of prey; but he, too, knows not happiness, and the poem ends with quite a pessimistic ring.

From these "exotic" themes, which held him captive a long time—here belong, to wit, the fragments of "Galub the Caucasian"—the Christian estranged from his people by his new creed—and in which he observed faithfully the Romantic "local colour," the poet turned to "national" subjects and sought them, following the bent of the age, principally in history. What others passed by unheeding or spoiled, he preferred to pick up. Thus his "Sage Olég" definitely corrected the unsuccessful ballad of Rylêev, while a line from the same man's "Voynaróvsky" about the wife of the martyr Kochubéy and her seduced daughter got upon his nerves. How could a poet pass such horrors by? He found it unpardonable and composed (1825, printed 1829) his "Mazépa," which in order not to collide with Byron he rechristened "Poltáva," to his own loss, for Poltáva, the principal and national event, only takes up the third canto, while the two first are devoted to the Hetman and his behaviour to the old and rich Kochubéy and his young and handsome daughter, who falls in love with the hereditary enemy and torturer of her father, the grey Hetman. The psychological riddle Pushkin has left unsolved; but for this, as also that the private feud passes unexpectedly into the glorification of Peter the Great, the poet repays us by the wonderful ring of the verse, by the sharply outlined figures that pass before us as if alive; the style is wholly changed. With the simplest means, with a naturalness regularly affected, and an absence of art that is the greatest art, he narrated and depicted at a rapid rate with loosely flung strokes which yet produced the greatest clearness, an epical distinctness; his picturing of the scenery of the Ukraine, the glamour of its still summer nights, of the hot raging of battle, showed the sure hand of the master. Only Mazepa has become the conventional ruffian and his Maria,

the Ophelia of the third canto, a Romantic puppet. At the same time the poem is, after all the poetical miscarriages of the Lomonósovs and others, the first, and to this day the only, the unsurpassed Petriad.

Even before this he had found opportunity in his "Stanzas" (1826) to extol Peter; the beginning of the reign of Nicholas, like that of Peter, had been darkened by disturbance and executions, so he hopes and wishes for the future similar unweariedness, firmness, and amnesty for the past—of his own Radical fits he took leave for ever. And soon a fresh occasion for a Petriad presented itself in the usual literary controversies. The Polish poet Mickiéwicz, his some time acquaintance of Moscow and St. Petersburg, had declared open war against official Russia in his "Petersburg," placing himself and Pushkin before Falconet's monument and putting Decembrist phrases in the latter's mouth, had shamefully touzled the splendour and dignity of the Northern Babel, the work of devils, and its mounting of guards, its flunkeys and lickspittles. Pushkin in his "Mêdny Vsádnik" (Brazen Horseman), *i.e.*, Falconet's statue,[1] took up the gauntlet in 1833 and 1834. He praised the thought that inspired the founding of the city, the pride and wonder of the North. "I love thee, creation of Peter, thy summers without nights, thy winter, the warlike activity of thy Plains of Mars" (before this we had heard quite a different story from him touching Alexander I.'s "Razvódy" or parades), "the tattered flags, the bullet-pierced metal caps of thy soldiers, and the rest; be fair, city of Peter, and stand unshakable as Russia." Here followed the description of the great inundation of 1834 and a true episode of it: the hero loses his beloved in the raging flood; crazed with grief, he threatens, when he reaches the monument, the founder of the city, and fancies himself pursued—he, the helpless worm—by the statue of the Tsar. Other matter also found its way into the composition, which was not to the address of Mickiewicz or St. Petersburg, but rather dealt with Peter's shattering of the prerogatives of the old nobility. That was never forgiven by this scion of the Boyars, who developed more

[1] It was emblematic of Peter taming Nature like a horse.—TR.

and more into a High Tory—in Russia, where administrative arbitrariness simply tramples on all "rights" or "feelings." Particular details, features of the poem, its plan and its versions, are contradictory.

The right of the poet to treat of modern social types and problems, while the critics bade him seek what was national exclusively among the common people or in the past, Pushkin expressly reserved to himself. "Onêgin," his favourite production, to which he would, if possible, have returned even after its completion, which for years was his companion in his epical and lyrical creation, is just a novel drawn from society. It is at the same time the first Russian novel: its predecessors by Izmáilov or Narêzhny were didactic and satirical portraitures of manners. In "Onêgin," for the first time all didactic purpose is wanting, though indeed not the satirical, for a "splenetic" mood decidedly reigned at the outset, and not till later did the poet as decidedly suppress it. From an objective novel "Onêgin" differs, apart from its versified form, by the strong subjective graft, the lyrical and satirical digressions which in places threatened to hide its brilliancy by their abundance, and in the later version were materially pruned. In place of stanzas in many places their numbers were put, and they themselves were omitted or were not written for their places; this even happened to the whole eighth canto ("chapter" he styled it, to the disgust of the nonplussed critics, who raised objections to externals because they were unable duly to appreciate the whole); Onêgin's account of his travels would only have retarded the main action.

According to the poet's own definition "Onêgin," at the nine or rather eight chapters of which he worked from 1823 to 1831, is "a collection of many-coloured snippets, half amusing, half sad, commonplace or ideal, the careless fruit of my playtime, of sleepless nights, of easy enthusiasm, unripe or withered years, the calm observations of the understanding or the bitter experiences of the heart." The plan was framed under Byron's influence, on his "Beppo" and "Don Juan," but while "Beppo" continued for years to influence him, as in the amusing, indecent, but admirably told "Count Núlin," a

parody of the Lucretia story (she defends herself with a mighty box on the ears, yet her husband nevertheless comes by his head-ornaments) and in the "Cottage of Kolómna" (the lover is smuggled in as cook—tableau when he throws off his disguise) "Don Juan" speedily and effectually lost its influence. For one thing, Pushkin's novel—again in strict contrast to the previous usage, which imperatively demanded of the novel striking adventures, such as Don Juan's—had no sort of surprises, and confined itself to the plainest prose of every-day life; on the other hand, all higher aims were wanting to his satire: it fought only an unimportant and mainly literary battle, and that in Russia. We make the acquaintance of a young man, a product of modern mis-education, who has chiefly prepared himself for the study of the *ars amandi*, but falls a victim prematurely to spleen, so that he gladly leaves St. Petersburg when a rich inheritance calls him to the country. At the end of three days the spleen turns up in the country too. Some distraction is afforded by his acquaintance with Lénsky, newly returned from Germany and enthusiastic over students' glory, Schiller and Kant, who introduces his neighbour to the family of Lárin. Here are two daughters, one a charming schoolgirl with a comely face, round "as the foolish moon upon the foolish horizon," and the object of Lensky's ardent love; the other, Tánya, older, less comely and fresh, silent, shy and retiring, with a wilful head and heart, misunderstood in her shallow surroundings and longing to be free of them, with a lively fancy and a firm and energetic will—the first and for long years the only picture of a Russian girl, in sooth yet unsurpassed; the like of it we shall at best find in Turgénev—for instance, his Asya and others. Literatures old and rich can but envy the Russian this picture of a woman. The creation of Tánya (Tatiána) alone would raise Pushkin high above all predecessors and most of his successors. Here already we are struck by what we shall constantly meet in Turgénev, that Pushkin in prose: the insignificance of the man as compared with the woman, as if in the higher ranks of society the quite subordinate position of the "bába" or woman among the people was avenging itself. On the artless village

girl the victim of the, to her, novel fashionable complaint makes the deepest impression.

> "Another. To none other I
> My heart's allegiance can resign;
> My doom has been pronounced on high,
> 'Tis Heaven's will and I am thine.
>
> * * * * *
>
> And thy protection I implore—
> Imagine! Here alone am I;
> No one my anguish comprehends,
> At times my reason almost bends,
> And silently I here must die."
>
> (Col. Spalding's Translation.)

So she confesses to Onêgin in a letter which well bears comparison with Julia's in "Don Juan." But Onêgin evades her; he will not grapple her to his "burnt-out" heart; she is not interesting enough for him, while he himself is too honourable to play the mere breaker of hearts. Presently Onêgin has to leave the neighbourhood on account of his duel with Lensky, and after some years meets Tánya in St. Petersburg again. Pining in vain, unhappy, left quite alone, she had been taken by aunts and cousins to Moscow, and in the end married to a rich man, an Excellency, and now shines out as a star in the firmament of the capital. Well, her brilliance dazzles Onêgin; he pays court to her, confesses his love to her; then she takes her revenge, though at the cost of her own happiness, for she too loves him as before, but her determination is none the less fixed to remain faithful to her husband and to break with Onêgin for ever, and she is man enough—one might perhaps better say in Russia "woman enough"—to subdue her passion and will not end like Anna Karénina. "Onêgin" might indeed be more rightly styled "Tánya," for she is the principal figure, if only on the ground of her strength of character; her original qualities are wholly transmuted by it. The success of the work, the single chapters of which appeared from 1825 to 1832, was most uneven. The first cantos delighted by their digression, lyrical intermezzos and splenetic outbursts; those

that followed, with their artistic vignettes of country life and their growingly objective treatment, disappointed more and more readers that were only in search of romantic subjectivity. In contrast to the early and vigorous ripening of his talent, people talked now only of the final decay of the same. The poet was, as was seldom the case with him, satisfied with his work, and spoke calmly of "the almanacs and journals which to-day abuse me so roundly, and once offered me madrigals: *E sempre bene*, gentlemen!" Yet it could not be denied that the hero, though a favourite character of the author's, degenerated in the course of the chapters. We should have expected more of him, if only because he openly poses as the mouthpiece of the poet, *e.g.*, in that harsh criticism of Russian literature from "Onêgin's Album," "Where are your own works? They affect us deeply by their language, but is that sufficient? The testing of our thoughts, of our experience, we do not derive from careless translations or the late stragglers where Russian intelligence and wit repeats copy-book maxims and lies for two. Of a truth, charming is the Russian Helicon!"

A national work, earnestly longed for by the critics and the public, was for the first time brought out, but folks passed it heedlessly by because of their narrow conception of the word "national." Pushkin had given his adherence to such a conception when in 1825 he wrote his dramatic chronicle, "Borís Godunóv." The epic poet, to be sure, was wholly devoid of dramatic talent, but brought himself to imitate "Measure for Measure," in epic form, in the "Angelo" of his later years. His "Borís" is the greatest poetical homage paid to Karamzín's historical work, the fruit of a careful study of it, deliberately imitated from Shakespeare's "Chronicles of Kings," only more loosely and less dramatically constructed, and without any homogeneity. The scenes might have begun at any time earlier, say at Úglich, and might be continued *ad lib.*, for their limits are arbitrary—*i.e.*, chronological. Pushkin plucked the one dramatic subject out of old Russian history. We say the one, because not even Ivàn the Terrible or Peter the Great could furnish a dramatic effect. They want

some sort of partner, for the massacre of defenceless and spiritless herds is by no means dramatic. Dramatic tension is lost in spaces which have no other potency than size, resistless as that may be, or, to use Vyázemsky's gibe, where there are two thousand miles between one idea and the next. Pushkin was not the first to handle the subject. From Sumarókov's and Narêzhny's time the False Demetrius had been brought on the stage, and after him Tolstoy, Ostróvsky, and others tried their hands, but none of them outdid Pushkin. Schiller's "Demetrius" is from the Second Act on sheer dramatised legend from the East, which happens to have historic names attached, and can enter into no comparison with the realism of Pushkin.

The "Boris" is a kaleidoscope of historical scenes. Each single one is of wonderfully convincing truth, fidelity, and simplicity, the whole penetrated by the love of the poet for the subject. "*C'est une œuvre de bonne foi*," he might say with justice. As to the conception of the individual characters, we will not quarrel with him. We are content that he does not create mere types, scoundrels, lovers of place, or hypocrites, as the subject might easily have led him into doing, but individuals, men of flesh and blood, as various as life itself. In the same way we allow some anachronisms to pass, for we are more than compensated by the lively pageant of this antiquity, the hundred years' development; idealised, indeed, but conceived with extraordinary fulness—*e.g.*, the splendid scene in the monastery cell where the monkish chronicler sets forth his conception of the world and his work. The scenes of vulgar life in the tavern on the Lithuanian frontier or in Moscow may compete with Shakespeare's. Next, he performed a real miracle with the language which hitherto no poet had been able to suit to those times. Just as Karamzín regularly fell into the style of the Chronicles, so he makes his personages speak simply, forcibly, and in the antique way, and thus adds to our illusion. And yet the author hesitated rightly, as the result proved, to publish the drama. It was not brought out till 1831, and turned out a complete fiasco. "Our timid taste will not stand true Romanticism," he wrote in 1825. On the

stage he made no headway at all—at least, not for decades. The public disliked the apparent coolness—*i.e.*, objectivity—of the poet, the critics the absence of a defined plan, the disregard of the simplest dramatic requirements. That the author executed the most varied scenes in the same pure, austere style of classical simplicity; that he was the first to depict complete pictures of old Russian life—not for nothing was the drama dedicated to the memory of Karamzin; that characters in these scenes rose to fascinating trueness to life, the prejudiced professional critics, already antagonistic to Pushkin, did not take into account.

These dramatic scenes awakened the desire for others, yet no large panoramas were to be depicted; it was still only painting on the small scale. The scene from "Faust," for instance, yielded a dialogue between Mephisto and a Faust that was not Goethe's, but Byron's—a bored and disenchanted pessimist of the nineteenth century. "The Avaricious Knight" showed, in almost imposing outlines, the overwhelming power of cozening gold over one caught in its magic net. The most interesting is "Mozart and Salieri," the contrast between the God-befavoured, youthfully light-hearted genius, letting himself go heedlessly, and the mere man of talent who has painfully achieved all progress in the sweat of his brow, who grumbles at this unjust division of gifts, because they crown not self-sacrificing toil but the head of a total idler. The basis was a quite unvouched for anecdote of how jealousy of his gains drove the craftsman into crime against the artist. In the "Guest of Storm" the lady-killing of Don Juan is admirably portrayed, the music of the verse is ideal. "The Watermaid" ("Rusálka") remained incomplete, as did the libretto of an opera founded on a popular legend which Mickiéwicz too worked up: how the deserted maiden, becoming a Naiad, drags the faithless one down into her element. The end was discovered not long since, and gave rise to long-winded disquisitions.

In the "Watermaid" the poet came near to popular chords. Led astray by critics as to what was national, he now tried to make friends with the world of legend and song, which during his youth had been as good as closed to him. He

himself collected songs from the people's mouths and turned legends into verse. Just the first, weakest attempts, when he had not yet hit upon the right epical tone—he as yet regarded the material sceptically, concealing his lack of resource behind irony—pleased better than any, seemed fresh poetical revelations, and opened the perspective of a "national" poetry. But Pushkin rapidly gained strength. The last "skázka" (story) of the Fisher and the Fish showed popular colouring not only in externals, but in the tone and spirit of the whole.

Beside this wrestling with the Epic Muse, even in the dialogues and monologues of his dramatic attempts, through which this poetical Proteus triumphantly exhibited an astonishing skill in the mastery of the most varied materials and forms, lyrical composition went on uninterruptedly—the production of a true "Occasional Poet," who only reacts on fixed impressions, instead of performing variations without restraint on erotic, Bacchic, and other themes. True pearls of lyric poetry they are; perfect in manner, clear to transparency, deeply and truly felt, the love poems of a tenderness, chasteness, and sincerity which has none of the unrestrained sensuousness of his youthful lyrics—all astonishing in their versatility, addressed to youthful friends from the Lyceum, or even to the sea, to celebrate with it the singer of the sea, Byron, "who like thee is mighty, deep, and gloomy; like thee, restrained by nothing." Especially characteristic are the confessions of the poet touching his calling. He shares the romantic conception of the special sanctity of the poet-seer, and the abjectness of the populace to whom the seer condescends to proclaim wisdom, and show the paths it must tread. He estimates his illusions highly, and does not barter them for vulgar realities.

"Accursed be the light of truth, if it seeks idly to please the calmly commonplace, the envious, the seeker for scandal. No, in my eyes the deception that raises us goes far above heaps of low realities." He despises the herd, the journeyman, the slave of his necessities and cares. "We poets are born for enthusiasm, for dulcet tones, for prayers, not to better the mass nor instruct it nor sweep away its rubbish.

"Poet, on people's love set not too high a value,
The momentary noise of frenzied praise will pass
The verdict of a fool, and then the cold crowd's laughter
Thoul't hear : remain unmoved, unruffled and austere.
Thou art a king : live thou alone, the path of freedom
Tread thou ; wherever thee thine own free spirit lead,
Perfecting aye the fruits of thy beloved fancy,
Not asking a reward for thine achievement high.
Reward is in thyself—thyself the last tribunal ;
More strictly than all else canst thou gauge thine own work.
Art thou then satisfied with it, exacting artist ?
Art thou then satisfied ? then let the crowd find fault.
And on the altar spit whereon thy fire is burning,
And in its childish play make thy tripod to shake."

[NOTE.—In renderings of poetry an attempt has usually been made to keep the rhythms of the originals ; but rhyme has had necessarily to be left out or used very sparingly. Russian is very rich in rhymes, and to reproduce them would entail too great a departure from literalness.—E. H. M.]

This indifference to the judgment of the crowd even mars his poetical "Monument," which, after the example of Horace, he has raised to himself, his *Non omnis moriar* :—

"And famous shall I be while in the world sublunar
One single poet shall remain ;
My fame shall fly abroad through all the breadth of Russia.

* * * * *

And long for this shall I be dear unto the people,
That noble sentiments I by the lyre awoke,
That in our cruel age[1] I celebrated Freedom
And mercy for the fall'n bespoke.
To God's command, my Muse, in all things be resigned.
Thou insult need'st not fear, seeking no crown of laurel :
Praise and detraction bear with unaffected mind,
Nor with the blockhead pick a quarrel."

This indifference, to be sure, was not quite sincerely meant. He that in his youth had been so spoilt by applause felt the visibly increasing indifference, and found the adverse judg-

[1] In the original "That in Radíshchev's steps."

ments bitter, for in all ways the poet was quite unlike the man. He spoke his mind plainly. "As long as Apollo"—he never could quite renounce mythological arabesques—"does not need his poet for the holy sacrifice, he smiles meanly among the cares of the vain world, his sacred lute is silent, and his soul sleeps coldly, and among all the vain children of the world perhaps none is more vain than he." We are not astonished at his bitter complaints of life.

"Gift without use, gift made by chance,
  Life, wherefore art thou given me?
Or wherefore art thou doomed to end
  By fate's mysterious decree?

Who was it used a hostile power
  From nothingness to call me out
With passion fill my soul for me
  And agitate my mind with doubt?

No purpose is before me set,
  Empty my heart, my mind is bare;
Life's clattering monotony
  Wearies me with a dull despair."

Even in 1829 premonitions of an early death crop up.

The more seldom Pushkin in his later years had to call on his poetry, the more eagerly he turned to despised prose. He believed, something like Gógol, in his calling as a historian, yet nothing came of it beyond the collecting of materials for "Peter the Great" and "Pugachóv's Revolt." However, he tried his hand at prose stories, not without success. The former poet of Onêgin turned from contemporary problems more and more decidedly. Modern and truly Russian themes occupied him indeed, but he either waived them in favour of others (*e.g.*, Gógol) or let the pieces drop when scarcely begun. On the other hand, historical romance attracted him, but he had not the necessary confidence in his prose to be the Russian Scott. With the powerful swing of his verse the clear but carefully groping and unadorned diction of his stories contrasts sharply. The subjects he always chose from the epochs that were most familiar to him—how Peter wooed

the Boyar's daughter for his negro (incomplete, with an interesting anecdotic appendix) and from the time of the revolt of Pugachóv "The Captain's Daughter," with the virtuous hero and his stereotyped reward; the surroundings are most characteristically reproduced. The "Tales of Bêlkin" are rather anecdotes, of a gruesome or sentimental nature, told not without charm. "The Queen or Spades," a gambling story, reminds us of Hoffmann, who was soon to be all the rage in Russia; it found the largest circle of readers. The most interesting, if they did not break off so abruptly, would be the "Annals of the Village of Gorókhino," which throws light on serfdom. Even dearer to him than these historical studies, richly endowed by Imperial favour, and attempts in elegant literature, were his journalistic ventures. He had a share in Moscow and St. Petersburg papers, and at length received permission to publish the non-political and purely literary *Contemporary*, which was named on the principle of *canis a non canendo*, in which he wished to create a shrine of authoritative literary criticism, to wrest the same from pedants and meddling hands. He had no success with his quarterly, although he gathered the best men of letters about him. Not till years later, when the *Contemporary* came into the hands of young men, was it destined to attain the unforeseen and dominating influence which attaches inseparably to that name.

Without the poet suspecting it, without accounting to himself for it, he was in a fair way to become, step by step, but without cessation—the true Russian transformation of the poet of freedom—a belauder of the police. In vain he strove against it, and declared the poet was born, not for the tangles of life, for self-seeking, and conflict, but for inspiration, dulcet tones, and prayers. The shelving track, once he had entered on it, carried him ever deeper downwards. It was less so, to be sure, in his poetry, the spring of which already began slowly to dry up as he grew prematurely old. Vyázemsky judged differently and more rightly of this flunkey poetising on one's knees, of this singing the praises of the hangmen. So, too, did Mickiewicz, who fears for his sometime friends lest, dishonoured by titles

or orders, and selling their free souls to the Tsar, they should celebrate his triumphs with venal tongues. But all the more was it true of his prose. True, he was refused all journalistic activity such as must in the end have associated Gréch and Bulgárin with him, but his efforts towards a reasonable compromise with the inexorable reality of the Nicolaitan system led him away into the most questionable concessions. To him there was already no longer any disgrace in unconditional devotion to the Autocracy, in so far as it respects and furthers national wants. What we read about Autocracy in his pages before the banquet was quite different. This political sloughing of Pushkin's, the most unlovely of his sloughings, had come about in the following way :—

We broke off his biography at his banishment to the South. Disputes with his new superior, Count Vorontsov, on whom he fashioned the imperishable epigram—

> "Half- my lord, half-tradesman, half-sage, and half-dunce,
> Half-knave, there's a hope he'll be whole for this once";

and a blasphemy intercepted in a letter brought about the relegation of "the incorrigible" to his paternal property. In its solitude he found concentration and the necessary leisure for extensive historical and literary studies, in order to put himself on a level with the age. Here he tided over the Decembrist disturbance and its first consequences, and from here petitioned for the reversal of his outlawry. A month later the messenger of the Tsar fetched him to Moscow (September, 1826), where he had an outspoken explanation with Nicholas. The latter spoke of him as one of the ablest men in Russia, and entrusted him with a memorandum on popular education, offered to act himself as censor of his writings, and soon after gave him leave to reside in the two capitals. In the end the tokens of Imperial favour increased; he was again attached to the Foreign Office, obtained access to the archives, and visited the scenes of Pugachóv's revolt, all by permission. When on one occasion he travelled from St. Petersburg to Moscow without it he was admonished by the Third Section.

In 1833 he actually became Gentleman of the Bedchamber

i.e., the same at thirty-three that his friend Vyázemsky was at eighteen.

Pushkin slowly reconciled himself to the new system, for his fancy played the poet an ill-turn. The chivalrous conduct of the Emperor, his constancy and goodwill, the outward splendour of Russia and its boundless prestige, dazzled and bribed the patriot and the Conservative, who soon adopted a tone worthy of Derzhávin; thus, in 1831, he hurled at Europe the invectives: "You threaten us with words, try it in deeds! Or is it that the word of the Russian Tsar has become powerless? Is it something new for us to contend with Europe, or has the Russian grown unused to victory, or are there too few of us? Will not from Derm even to Tauris, from Finland's cold rocks to fiery Colchis, from the shaken Kremlin to the walls of immovable China, Russia arise, blazing with its bristles of steel? Only send us, you praters, your angry sons, we have room for them on Russia's fields among graves that are not strange to them." Thus was completed the desertion of the ex-Decembrist—he openly confessed to the Emperor that he had been one of "them"—to the official camp.

An easy process it was not. Even the Emperor's act of grace in serving as censor meant for him a new burden, fettered him beforehand, and at most insured him the satisfaction that his "Borís Godunóv" came out without erasures, in other respects the difficulties with the Censorship and the Third Section remained the same: there was the same secret police supervision; no devices were any good, such as abusing Radíshchev, whom he so highly respected, just for the sake of being able to discuss the name and the work publicly. And yet Pushkin, to whom we owe the biting poetical epistles "To the Censor," could maintain that the Censorship was something rational or justifiable! Thus it was that his Conservatism overrode logic and reality. He passed through the stages of a Karamzín and emerged at last as the same worshipper of autocracy and its inseparable attributes, the knout and the Censorship, a deeply religious and hotly Conservative champion. Russian Liberalism is apt to lose colour sadly, not only with

such riffraff as Bulgarín and Gréch. Class pride and aristocratic, reactionary and bigoted ideals now formed the basis of his social, political, and religious character. We do not so greatly doubt the sincerity of his transformation, we only lament that the singer of freedom should place himself without any reserve at the service of the Tsar instead of that of the country (though that confusion is constant in Russia). A kindly fate preserved him in the end from the last humiliation. Pushkin was in the best way to obtain the coveted title of Chamberlain, fresh pensions and orders, gout and the indifference, if not contempt, of every decent man, when the bullet of a vulgar adventurer put an end to his restless and chequered life.

He had to pay a bitter penalty for having tasted the tree of knowledge; the recoil after 1825, when all fled shamefully to cover, by no means spared him any more than others. That December day avenged itself not only on its immediate victims, but on Russia, whose progress was thrown back for decades, and on her best sons, who, forced out of their proper course, fell into apathy or in restless, nervous haste as devotees of art, science, or philanthropy, tried to deceive themselves as to the purposelessness of their pursuit—the Princes Orlóv (the "chemist," once general, the Rhine of the "Arzamas"), and Odoévsky, Alexander Turgénev, and so on. Others lost themselves in mysticism, like Küchelbeker, the younger Odoévsky, and Iváshev (the last three are Decembrites), or made ready for a platonic perversion to Catholicism, like Chaadáev, or actually became Catholics, like the Jesuits Pechórin and Gagárin. Others sought oblivion in orgies and gambling, which method Pushkin also tried, while all of them lost their moral standby, though in return they were now delivered from the "pitiful spirit of doubt and denial," the "cold scepticism of French philosophy, the intoxicating and harmful dreams which had had such a dreadful influence on the fairest flower of the preceding generation"—all this is his own saying. By it he imposed only on himself, and that not completely. The last ten years of his life, apart from a few bright spots—notably too arduous literary activity made him

forget everything in the autumn months, his favourite time for production, as at Boldino in 1830—simply wore him out prematurely through constant unrest, the taking up of the most various plans, sharing in warlike operations, journeys, &c., continually changing his place of abode, daily growing more discontented with himself and with his whole surroundings, which at last brought on the catastrophe.

Even his literary work afforded less and less satisfaction, for the applause of a few that were like-minded could not make up to him for the total estrangement of the great public. The reasons for this were by no means arbitrary, accidental, or unfounded. People could not accustom themselves to the idea that the advanced singer of Opposition and Revolution had become the lamblike supporter of Orthodoxy and Aristocracy; they saw in it an apostasy and scented, though unjustly, egotistic motives. The poems in which Pushkin defended himself against the accusation of having become a flatterer remained, like what was most valuable in his productions, for the time unpublished. In another way the whole aim of the poet was disappointing, seeing folks were still under the spell of romantic exaggerations which had been imposed precisely by the "Prisoner in the Caucasus" and "The Fountain of Baghchisarai." The progress of the poet, who soon shook himself free of these excesses, was not shared by them; such a public would never have allowed to pass current Pushkin's own opinion that "Ruslán" is tame, "The Prisoner" immature, and in face of the poetry of the Caucasus the sheerest Gólikov prose, while the Khan in the "Fountain" is absurdly melodramatic. The riper, clearer, more objective and perfect in form Pushkin's creations grew, the less did they answer to the artless, melodramatically romantic trend of the age; his lyrical note seemed hushed; for its fairest outcome, the verses to the Emperor and to Mickiewicz, remained unpublished. The epic and dramatic productions that appeared after "Poltáva" met with more and more decisive rejection; the wretched pedlar's wares of a Bulgárin or Zagóskin proved far more attractive. Thus the ways of the poet and the public diverged more and more. The tragical

unlooked-for loss, the general realisation of foreign and sordid intrigues, which alone were responsible for the death of the poet, first reconciled the public once more to their former darling, and beside his bier the old affection blazed up brightly once again.

Thus, even with his contemporaries, the verdict concerning the poet oscillated, and the contest around Pushkin remained important even for posterity. In the forties the critic Bêlínsky pointed out the beauties of his works as their enthusiastic admirer, but even he dwelt on the art of the author as purely historical and an exclusive devotion to the beautiful, not to the time and its requirements. When these demands grew louder and more one-sided journalistic criticism rated the importance of the author lower and lower, while the purely æsthetic did not allow itself to be turned from its admiration; in the excitement the criticism of a Písarev then allowed itself to be led into the greatest breaches of moderation and good taste. Not till 1881, at the unveiling of the Moscow Memorial to the poet, was there a unanimous and overwhelming ovation accorded by the cultured world, even though not quite without exaggerations, such as Dostoevsky's, who had always been the deepest and most ardent admirer of that "world-genius." Only since then can one speak of a fixed estimate of the great Moscovite.

Pushkin is the national poet of the Russians, although his poetry is by no means national. Not without justice did people call him the Peter the Great of poetry, for Peter's influence too was alien. Both learned from other countries, but it was not they that first recognised the necessity of this view or carried it out—they only helped it on towards decisive success. Pushkin was an imitator like his predecessors, but as compared with their mostly but mediocre talents, and often one-sided, undeterminate courses he first appeared as the poetic genius which carries away the reluctant, and in the service of the beautiful develops into a moral force with which even rulers on the throne seek to come to terms. All narrowness is alien to him, and the power of adaptation or transformation

of this virtuoso of form becomes simply astounding. He begins with roguish and easy glorification of enjoyment, an Epicurean among poets, apparently avoiding all seriousness, but the Sybarite becomes a rallier in the political struggle, and lends to indignation and mockery the most flaming language. We find him soon at the feet of Byron ; through this romantic poetry he approaches the true and finds in the end paths of his own ; thus he becomes the most artistic poet of the Russians. In certain scenes of "Godunov," in the later cantos of "Onêgin," and some of his lyrics he creates what is imperishable, the great models without which a literature can never become great. For the first time the others take example by him, while till now every one went his own way, *i.e.*, imitated this or that foreigner, but Pushkin founded a school ; even in the older writers, who were once his teachers, one sees his influence. It is essentially one of form ; not wealth of ideas, but the mastery of "Pushkin's verse," which has become simply an æsthetic definition, is aimed at, mostly to no purpose, by his successors. The indescribable music of verse, its full sensuousness, plasticity too, with nothing blurred or indistinct, as with Zhukóvsky, are coupled with genuine and deep feeling, sincere melancholy, and lively whims ; if he lacks the passionate glow of love as of hate, yet in his creations he always achieves that balance which he so painfully missed in life. He gives quite the impression of a classical poet, and especially in his later work one forgets his romantic antecedents, and throughout it is the perfection of his form which begets these illusions. It seems to us a natural expression, as if it had been born with the matter or the idea ; but behind the apparent ease and absence of effort lurks conscientious, untiring work, polishing and shaping, above all shortening and compressing of the diction, which now drapes the body like a heavy rustling dress of state, now floats about like a loose wrapping. Krylóv's and Zhukóvsky's styles are original indeed, but how Pushkin, who commands all stops, outdoes the onesidedness of one and the other !

It is no easy task to speak of Pushkin ; involuntarily one feels oneself facing a riddle, and dreads to be unjust to him.

Thus we dwelt on his historical dramas, epics, and novels, without really believing that they completed Pushkin's calling. He is also the poet of the present, as witness his "Onêgin" and "Annals of the Village of Gorókhino" ("Peasham"). These give us the idea that they were written by a Shchedrin, or were a chapter from a story with a purpose of complaint. The good-natured ridiculing of the literary paces of his "Bêlkin" was followed by jesting that was by no means good-natured, on the pleasures and pains of Russian village life. But was there any possibility of continuing such a story in face of the Censorship, of the Emperor, the police, the Ministers of Education, and lastly of an Uvárov, whom Pushkin justly despised so bitterly, and on whom he wrote the most scathing of his satires, which is said to have partly led to the final catastrophe? Before this brazen wall Pushkin recoiled, let "Gorókhino" and all wise, present-day plans drop, and wasted much time and strength in the emptiest historical researches, from which nothing but boredom could result. Here at least he was safe from the triple Censorship and the police. "Sing, birdie, Sing!" cries the cat in Krylóv's fable to the nightingale, which she holds in her claws. The fable is meant for Pushkin and the Russian system. And Pushkin felt this lamentable pressure, and wrote in despair to his wife, "The devil must have been in me to be born in Russia, and with talent!" How often he doubtless longed to be out of his gilded cage at St. Petersburg, and in the poverty-stricken freedom of his great opponent in Paris! Slowly but surely "they" broke his pinions, and only the growing unrest of the poet betrays the pangs of his conscience. And then sudden death!

It is always worth while and enticing to speak of Pushkin; a more genuine artist the world has not seen. He is no dramatist or epic poet, and never can he put large masses in motion. Only compare his "Onêgin" with the contemporary "Pan Tadéusz" of Mickiewicz. He is a lyric poet, but as such the echo of Russia. What sound of home he himself heard in the "Song of the Postilion" is repeated by him. Now unbridled joy, now deep gloom of heart; with years

and experience the one is lost, the other grows. When he had renounced "the light-winged revelry, the light-winged love, the sweet *far niente*" of his early youth, he desired "to devote to the Fatherland the highest flight of his soul." "Oh, could my voice but flutter others' hearts! Why burns a profitless glow in my breast? Why did the orator's great gift not fall to my lot? Shall I ever, friends, see the people unoppressed, slavery fall at the nod of the Tsar, and will the glorious Dawn of enlightened Freedom some day at last break over my country?" In place of that his "Arion" needs must sing—

> "Many of us there were upon our craft,
> And some of us were hoisting up the sails,
> Others were dipping deep the mighty oars
> And pulled together in the quietness.
> Leaning against the helm our steersman wise
> In silence guided the deep-laden craft,
> And I, filled full of careless confidence,
> Sang to the sailors. Sudden a loud squall
> Flew down and crumpled all the water's breast.
> Perished the steersman and the sailors too,
> And I alone, singer mysterious,
> Was cast up by the storm upon the shore.
> I sing my former hymns and in the sun
> Beneath a rock I dry my dripping garb."

Even so he deceived himself again; there was no longer any possibility of singing the former hymns, nor that his incorruptible voice should remain the echo of the nation. True, he did not "by unlawful treachery abase his proud conscience, his unbending lute," he became no flatterer, but drew back upon himself, conjured his Muse to visit him that his soul might not grow cold and stiff, and moulder in the midst of the soulless pride, the glittering stupidity, among Godfearing coquettes, willing slaves, amid commonplace scenes of fashion, gentle learned treachery, the cold decisions of hard-hearted vanity, the vexatious emptiness of calculated thinking and prating. Soon he frankly owned to himself "extinct merriment of mad years weighs on me heavily, like dreary crapulousness. But, even as wine, the

pain of past days strengthens with age. Mournful is my path. The wild-tossing sea of the future proffers me troubles and sorrow. And yet I would not die, friends—nay, live, to think and to endure. And I know enjoyment falls to my lot among all the sorrow, cares, and adversity. Once more will I intoxicate myself with harmony, burst out into tears over what I have devised, and perhaps Love will brighten into a farewell smile over my hapless ending." To this programme, *i.e.*, his own nature, he remained true.

He found the new notes for his songs, he brought the language of poetry down from its stilts, although prejudiced criticism accused him of using "low burlák" (bargee) "words." Nor was this enough. "A sower of freedom in the wilderness, I went forth early, before the morning star, with pure, unsullied hand to sow the nourishing seed in the furrows of slavery. Yet I only lost my time, my good intentions, and my trouble." After he had fought sufficiently against the current, he at last swam with it, till his bark of life was dashed to pieces. On this short voyage there was further revealed to him the poetry of the monotonous Russian landscape, which as yet was quite beyond his contemporaries, the poetry of the Russian people, which was not romantic enough for them.

It is given to no country that in it should more than once be revealed a man of such varied and high qualities, which generally exclude each other. Pushkin astonished his hearers by the vivacity, clearness, and fineness of his mind; he had an exceptional memory, a sure judgment, and a cultivated taste. "I knew him right well and long; I looked on him as a man of sensitive, at times frivolous, but always sincere, noble, and open character. His failings seemed to arise from the circumstances and society amongst which he lived, but the good in him came from his own heart," wrote his great friend and rival Mickiewicz, when the pistol-bullet had shattered the expectations that his admirers built up on his long silence as a poet, a silence they had interpreted only as a happy augury for Literature.

Perhaps this opinion was an erroneous one, like so many others on Pushkin. People had once expected him to

play a political and Radical part, and had made a thorough mistake; it was not in the least in his blood, but had been forced on the easily swayed man by youthful friends, whereas he was fundamentally Conservative. Nay, more, Pushkin's hatred of innovation is by no means a rare phenomenon, especially with authors of genius. The revolutionaries, the innovators in the sphere of mind, knowledge, or art are all the more reserved in all other spheres, as if in this way a sort of balance was to be restored in them and contradictions removed. Pushkin is only the servant of the beautiful, only seeks the beautiful; hence the contrast of life and poetry with him. How little significant, for instance, was she, how little he esteemed her in reality, to whom he addressed his noblest love-poems! Thus his art refined and idealised the sordid and the paltry. Over times in which the cult of the beautiful has to retire into the background, as in the Russia of 1861, which was settling matters that were vital, Pushkin accordingly loses his power. When the social waves draw seaward again, men return devoutly to their extolling of beauty: the magic that it radiates is indeed imperishable.

CHAPTER VII

THE ROMANTIC POETS

The Pushkin Pleiad : Délvig, Yazýkov, Baratýnsky, Venevítinov Kozlóv, Podolínsky, Polezháev—Lérmontov, his youth, and outside influences—Social themes—Pessimism—Poetical Romances—Dramas—His position—Koltsóv and the Folk-song.

WHOEVER, leaving the exotic and mystical blooms of German, French, and English Romanticism, approaches the Russian, remains disappointed. The longing for the *fleur bleue*, the fantastic ride into wonderland, allegories heavy with meaning, pantheistic or social dreams, mystical transports, are all essentially alien to Russian literature as to the Russian temperament. Both are by nature very sober, clinging to the clod of reality, and do not roam among the stars. Sound sense—how rich Pushkin was in it !—a mind tinged with scepticism, for the Russian only laughs at German enthusiasm and exaggeration ; a very moderate feeling for Nature, for only men interest the Russian—his landscapes are much too lacking in variety and charm ; a direct aversion from abstractions, for hitherto Russia has produced no noteworthy philosopher, though it has theologians and moralists. Such conditions, I say, are most unfavourable to the flourishing of flowers of romance. How soon Pushkin came to his senses, how few Russian poems there are that move in the flaunting garb of Romanticism, with all its lilies and stars ! At this day we see that the re-birth of poetry, symbolical, decadent, or philosophical, is in Russia a most difficult matter, and reaps rather cheap ridicule than serious consideration.

Russian Romanticism—one must force oneself to use the expression—differs in other material points from European. It is characterised by a quite unromantic restraint of the mind, and seems extraordinarily cramped and petty, without boldness or depth, and that was due not only to temperament, but to the age and the *régime* of Nicholas; it smells regularly of Arakchéev's hereditary machines, a Romanticism of sergeant-majors and clerks. Doubtless hangmen are necessary, but to sing of them is neither needful nor nice. This maxim, formulated by the tact of Vyázemsky, does not exist for Pushkin, Polezháev, and others, who calmly send forth their heroes against Circassians or Poles, and abuse the latter, as if the Circassians had not heroically defended the freedom of their mountains against fearfully superior numbers. Lérmontov alone is in this, as in other respects, an honourable exception. How wretched the Russian Byrons look as compared with their model! How he clears his throat, how he spits, they have learned and imitated; but his championship of freedom and truth is not incumbent on them. Their protests against the Catechism and other dogmas always end with a *laudabiliter se subjecit*. Podolínsky even brings it about that his Peri converts Div, which A. de Vigny would not even have ventured on with his Eloa. Their opposition, as with Pushkin before them, ends in passive quietism. Their supposed compromises are unconditional surrenders; they at most reserve for themselves feeble pessimism; the Titans collapse much too speedily into pygmies, and do not even ruffle the authority of a rent-collector. To be sure there is one exception.

No wonder, then, that even in the Pushkin "Pleiad" no Romanticist of the true breed is to be found; and with several of them one is disposed generally to question his belonging there, otherwise than nominally. Take, to begin with, the young "Slav, a Greek in mind, a Teuton by blood," Baron Delvig, the fellow-student of Pushkin, who, in reality, never got farther than the initial stage out of which Pushkin passed in 1820. He loved to represent himself as spoiled and petted by Muses and Graces, as if idleness and indolence were the most indispensable qualities of the poet. Like Bátyushkov,

he imitated the antique in his idylls and elegies, and attained to a high degree of tenderness; but he became best known by his imitations of the national song, by far the most successful and therefore most popular in their day, *i.e.*, before Koltsóv came on the scene. He was not prolific, but noted for good taste, and Pushkin constantly consulted him and fully trusted his judgment: hence the whole circle expected much of the *Literary Gazette* which Delvig began to publish in 1830—after many previous Almanacs, "Flowers of the North," "Snowdrops," &c.—and which avowedly was to be the mouthpiece of an organised aristocratic criticism. The acceptance of a strophe after Delavigne on the victims of the Days of July at once put an end to the journal, and ere long the life of the editor, too, in January, 1831. The pleasing prospect of serving the Autocracy journalistically Pushkin found himself unable to realise either in this journal or in his *Contemporary*.

Of longer duration, though without being much more productive, was the activity of Yazýkov, whom Pushkin inspired, especially when he visited him in his exile at Mikhailóvskoe in 1826. After Yazýkov had failed to learn anything in all sorts of professional schools, he continued the same study at Dorpat, where, as first Russian "old stager," he, in German student fashion, cultivated wine, women, and song, not merely platonically, like Pushkin and Delvig. In this most dissipated student life there was only one bright episode—the silent, chaste devotion to an angel upon earth, Professor Voéykov's wife, sister of Zhukóvsky's flame, the wife of Professor Moyer. These youthful songs of Yazýkov's were marked by unsimulated feeling; the joys of Bacchus and of Eros were celebrated in verse naturally poor in ideas, but all the richer in the diction of sensuality. He was the first that knew how to depict female beauty, and he succeeded also in certain pictures from Nature. With the strains of this mostly rollicking but often most picturesque poetry mingled others that were graver, not only in the lines to his Muse, Mme. Voéykov, but in the first prayers and poetic imitations of the Old Testament, which later were to divert him to purely religious lyric poetry. His youthful dreams found an abrupt and

mournful end, be it said, and when, after a lengthy pause, the poet again came on the scene he had "become a Tartuffe through illness and by relationship a Slavophile." Now the repentant sinner caused the poet, in moments of terror and trembling, to rise above the dust of earth, listen to choirs of angels, and from the heights of heaven bear down prayers to the trembling that we may take them to heart and be saved by our faith—witness "The Earthquake" in 1844—and at the same time he wrote the indictment in verse, "Not Ours," in which he charged Chaadáev with apostasy from Orthodoxy, the radical Professor of History, Granóvsky, with heresy and leading the young astray, Herzen of wearing the brilliant liveries of the West, and all of traitorousness towards their country. Even the Slavophil Aksákov was indignant at these "Slavonic policemen in Jesus Christ's name."

Of greater conceptions neither Delvig nor Yazýkov nor the other Romantics were capable, all being at bottom lyrical poets, even the most gifted among them whom Pushkin placed highest, Prince Baratýnsky, although he tried his hand at narrative poems, which were all composed on the same pattern, only differing in the localities: "Eda," the seduced and deserted Finnish girl, with descriptions of scenery in her home, which Baratýnsky knew from serving there for several years, "The Ball" in Moscow drawing-rooms, and "The Gypsy." He is before all things a melancholy man; he flees from life to poetry, laments the want of harmony between the ideal and reality, and lets himself be led into complaints against the latter, in which imprudent sayings about the destructive power of knowledge and the undimmed happiness of the simple, the child of Nature, fall from him. Truth becomes a funeral torch; disappointment and pessimism take possession of him, and at last he grows enthusiastic over death, the solution of all riddles and loosing of all chains, exalting him quite in the antique way as the son of Æther, who, with his cool breath, tames the exuberance of life: he even sings of the last death on earth, the extinction of all life when over the void only a mist curls like a purifying sacrifice. "For our heavy lot is during the appointed time to nourish ourselves with sickly life, to

love the disease of existence and coax and dread the comforter Death: though truth never show itself to the poet in life, may it at least do so at the last moment, open his eyes and enlighten his understanding, so that, having seen through life, he may descend without murmuring into the abode of Night." Schopenhauer and water in verse! Like Yazýkov, he was silent a long time, and not till 1842 did he come forward with a new collection of more philosophical poems under the significant title "Evening Twilight," repeating the same ideas with greater perfection in the diction, in pale, shadowy outlines. Not with the idle, stupefied herd, which only responds to hollow, conventional notes, will the word echo that has passed beyond passion and the earthly. Here were uttered later the words touching the emptiness and vanity of knowledge, and how the heart of Nature closes before the inquiring spirit, that vexed the Radical critic. The resigned and melancholy pessimism of Baratýnsky produces no impression on his fellows, for he became silent at the passionate protest of another pessimist.

Just as philosophically, but not pessimistically attuned was the idealistic lute of the Moscovite Venevitinov, who died in his twenty-second year, the Schellingite; it seemed as to form to belong in its chasteness and tenderness rather to antiquity than to Romanticism, although the theoretical dilatations of the author were sharply at variance with the conventional trammels and confident ignorance of the French: he was, however, rather a philosopher and critic than a poet. He was independent of Pushkin properly, and the same was the case with the eldest among them, Kozlóv, who, at an advanced age, first crippled and then blinded, became the poet of resignation, of a surrender which, as is often the case with the blind, was gently cheerful and deliberate, not induced by pain or imposed by force. There arose a peculiar philosophy or even apotheosic of suffering which reminds one of Zhukóvsky: as there is no happiness that does not change, and only the remembrance of happiness enjoyed comforts us, what else but suffering calls this remembrance back to us? So he bears his cross with a thankful mind, yet he admires Byron, but that must of course have been not for his protests and passions but

for his seeking after truth and justice. In his "Tale of Kiev" "The Monk," which enjoyed the greatest popularity and was translated into the most various languages (twice into French, into Italian, and so on), he imitated Byron, it is true: his hero also kills the man who wrecks his happiness, but it takes place in an outburst of fury. This crime it is that for ever banishes the happiness of resignation which he had already achieved—for with the Cross comes also hope—and restlessly he rolls about in his cell, no Byronic hero now. The gentle, meek Kozlóv preferred heroines who bear their fate calmly, follow the beloved to death, even when he has deceived and deserted them, and do not curse but bless him. In spite of his enthusiastic admiration for Byron, he turned for this reason from his bitterness to the more cheerful muse of Scott. No remarkable genius he, except perhaps with regard to form, for the most part only an imitator and translator: from his name and fate Zhukóvsky and Madame Voéykov, Pushkin and Mickiewicz, are inseparable; he was indebted to them for consolation and inspiration, and gratefully sang their praises. Romanticists, in a worse sense of the word, were Chodolinsky, the composer of blood-curdling poems—his Othello, Bórsky, killed his innocent Desdemona; but his jealousy was not even genuine, only the mere outcome of Byronic disillusionment. His Romanticism, the most tedious and unimportant, is quite financial, as is that of Benedíktov, author of political and patriotic songs, ostentatious, artificial, doing violence to language as to logic, dazzling simple people and decried by the critics, such as Bélínsky, who warned people against this hollow rhetoric, and even more by Dobrolúbov when he came to the fore again towards the end of the fifties. Of a large band of poets and poetesses let me mention here one who early came to grief, a man of indisputable talent, whose tragic fate is so characteristic of Nicholas's Russia and its patriarchal *régime*, Polezháev.

As a Moscow student he had already made for himself a certain name by his rollicking verses, of course only in MS., which his humorous narrative poem, "Sáshka," a regular parody of "Onêgin," telling of wild students' pranks and debauchery and of fighting with the Police, could only en-

hance. During the visit of the Emperor to Moscow the Police handed him the *corpus delicti*. The Emperor, an enemy of the universities, which he regarded as hot-beds of mental vice, and from attending which he held back the pupils of the privileged institutions, saw in it a remnant of Decembrism, had the student summoned before himself and the Minister of Instruction, so as to show him what came of his schools, and made him at the dead of night, which seems set apart for all administrative surprises in Russia, read "Sáshka" aloud. Picture to yourself the scene—the hotly indignant Emperor, the sleepy greyheaded Minister, the student, at first quite terrorised, but at length quite carried away by the racy swing of his smooth, admirable verses on the white satin shanks of his fair one. The Emperor kissed the student like a father, and put him for his moral purification in that great House of Correction the army, with permission, in case of necessity, to appeal to the Emperor by letter. When his letters remained unanswered he deserted in order to present them in person, was taken and condemned to run the gauntlet (see "The Prisoner"). The Emperor let him off the punishment and despatched him to the Caucasus, but in that God-forsaken wilderness Polezháev, who showed no inclination to be a police-poet, began to drink, simply to forget ("To Vodka"). He was indeed retransferred to Moscow in 1833, but consumption and spirits completed their work of destruction: the soldier was already dead, but the rats gnawed off his leg in the hospital cellar. The collection of his poems, in which, of course, the startlingly gloomy ones as well as the indecent were omitted, gave his picture in officer's uniform because the Censorship would not allow private's uniform. And it was a real talent which fell a victim to the "Spásskia Kazármy" (barracks, so-called from being near the Cathedral of the Saviour, "Spas"), once more only lyrical talent, for his soldier stories are uninteresting. He is distinguished by a vigorous, manly diction which preferred short verses, well coupled with the sappy material of his descriptive and lyrical poems, over which mists of despair and embitterment lowered, yet he accused—as became a loyal Russian—only himself and his wickedness.

The true Romanticist and Byronist is not Pushkin, and still less Zhukóvsky, but Mikhaíl Yúrievich Lérmontov, who in Germany is associated with the name of Bodenstedt, who knew, admired, and translated him: the great hater and passionate accuser, the embittered and protesting pessimist, who in the heavy atmosphere of Nicholas's reign was too little valued, but gained every succeeding ten years in importance and popularity: with Pushkin the second great poetical genius of Russia, yet, unlike Pushkin, it was not granted him to impart to us all that moved his breast. His song was abruptly and early cut short; after but eight-and-twenty years the bullet of his friend and rival put an untimely end to his life in a duel. We involuntarily enter on the contemplation of his work with a feeling of mournful dissatisfaction—far more than with Pushkin are doubts admissible how and what he might have had to say—or do we deceive ourselves here again? He astonishes us by the extraordinary precocity of his mind and by the tenacity with which he clings to the problems he has once attacked.

He was born at Moscow, October 2, 1814. His childhood went by calmly in the peace of the manor, interrupted only by an early journey (1826) to the Caucasus: in spite of Pushkin's "Prisoner," Lérmontov is the true bard of the Caucasus. His grandmother (his mother he lost early) secured the best Franco-English education for her only and dearly-loved Michel. The melancholy boy, left to himself, plunged early into reading, especially poets, soon wrote himself —of course, to begin with, French verses, then as early as his twelfth year Russian—at first only copying, then adding to and paraphrasing, *e.g.* Pushkin. At thirteen he went to Moscow to the University School, then to the College itself, but had to leave it in 1832 on account of disputes with his teachers. Then at eighteen years of age, having hitherto served only literature, he entered the Guards' Cadet School at St. Petersburg, leaving it two years later as an officer. He chose the military career because it would at least lead him by the shortest road, if not to the first literary goal, yet to the final one of all that exists: for it is better to die with the bullet in your breast than of the slow decay of age. A

year before this he wrote (1831): "No, I am not Byron; I am another chosen one, as yet unknown, like him a stranger persecuted by the world, yet with the soul of a Russian. I began sooner and shall end sooner; my mind will not complete much." Thus he anticipated his early death. Ten years later, in 1841, he described it plainly in the "Dream": "In the glow of mid-day I lay in the Daghestan valley motionless, with the lead in my breast; the deep wound still smoked, my blood oozed drop by drop, I lay all alone on the sand of the valley." On July 15th of that same year he actually died so.

The two years at the Cadets' School he characterised as fearful. He plunged into the whirl of amusements and dissipations, and devoted—a second Barkóv (the pornographer of the eighteenth century)—his pen to the same theme as Polezháev in "Sáshka," though the setting was different: love adventures in a garrison, on the march, and in camp, told with cynical candour and extraordinary skill. Written copies were circulated by his comrades among the *jeunesse dorée* of the capital of "The Peterhof Fête," "The Lancer's Wife," "Mongo," and lastly, in 1836, "The Cashier's Wife." To these promptings of a lewd muse were added many small songs of the same kind. Let us only mention that in "Mongo" the adventures of his friend Stolýpin ("Mongo") and himself ("Maióshka") are depicted—notably their flight from the villa of a leading dancer before a superior number of drunken civilians. He gives a very unflattering character of both heroes, talks of his own idleness, the law of his life, of his calm arguing as the fruit of his unrestraint, how in his young heart he hid the germ of coming sorrow, how he was prudent in words, hot in action, silent at meals, a godless prater when fasting. In "The Cashier's Wife," in the metre of "Onêgin," he narrated an episode of his garrison life at Tambóv—how the lancer seduces the pretty young wife of the old gambler and wins her of him at play, with the favourite digressions, interruptions, and apostrophisings of himself and the reader which we know to satiety from "Beppo" and "Don Juan." To this class belonged also his own "Sáshka," that of love stories with abundant auto-

biographical details and detached verses especially characteristic of Lérmontov, such as "For what or whither life may lead us, that our poor mind cannot fathom; but excepting two or three days and childhood it remains undoubtedly a heritage of woe." Compare years later the confession in "Irksome and Grievous" (1840)—

> "And life, if one looks round with cold attention,
> Is such an empty and a stupid jest."

As an officer Lérmontov felt himself in his element, indulged in the distractions of the *beau monde*, and even later on found the entry into high society which he had so long painfully missed, for which the old descent of his family, said to be from the Scotch Learmouth of which Scott sings, and the wealth and connections of his grandmother marked him out; he avoided dealings with men of letters as if they were *mauvais ton*, and prided himself on the part of lady-killer, having great success in spite of his uncomely exterior. If at first he was shy and lacked the key to the leaders of Society, "perhaps thank God!" this afterwards gave way to a mockingly ironical tone and demeanour: his declarations of love were immediately followed by bearishness. This at any rate was new; for that matter, he loved woman less than love, the first budding feeling, to just smell at the bud and throw it away that another might take it up. He is always busy and boils over, but his heart remains cold; he is perfectly weary not only of others but himself. If he has an idea he only asks where he read it; he will never be fit for anything—first it is the opportunity that is lacking, then the daring. His apparently brilliant future is flat and empty, and nothing will survive "de cette âme brulante et jeune que Dieu m'a donnée fort mal à propos." The letters from which these quotations are taken are of course all French. Hence this bustle is repugnant to him; nay, he often forgets himself in this cold, false, motley crowd; seeks, lost in dreams, for the clear tones of past years, and when he awakes the desire comes over him to disturb the calm of those about him in order to hurl in their faces his iron verse, tempered with bitterness and

malice. This he actually did; he fluttered with his flaming verse the aunts and cousins and fops of the Court and expiated it by being transferred to Georgia; when he got back to St. Petersburg his duel with the son of the French Ambassador drove him for the third time to the Caucasus. Once more, in 1841, he returned to the capital, but left it soon and betook himself back to the Caucasus, where he then forced his friend by constant vexations—for he was a most unpleasant companion—into the duel in which he fell at the feet of the mountains he had sung so splendidly. He was indeed the "Hero of Our Day," the Pechórin of his own novel which bears so many traits of the author, although he sedulously denied this identity while the public as sedulously sought it; it was just the same with Pushkin's "Onêgin," but that exhausts the resemblance between the two.

The poet is the product of the Nicholas *régime*, and in that lies the difference between his disposition and Pushkin's. The latter, coming from the milder, freer Alexandrine epoch, was possessed by political and social dreams and lost them but slowly in the new and repellent reality. Lérmontov, on the other hand, did not grow up till after the fateful day in December. As these dreamings were for years banished from society, there was nothing that could foster the germs of protest that slumbered in his breast. Later chance encounters with Decembrists were unable to change this at all. Hence Lérmontov is the most anti-social Russian poet and his pessimism the most hopeless; there is no escape for him, for the mere possibility of living for mankind, for humane objects, never enters his mind. His longing for an ideal, for a heaven and light, remains quite fruitless and therefore all the more desperate. The dense loyalty of his time and surroundings, the servile atmosphere, draws a few loyal turns from him too, but that in no way alters the dominant key. He cannot deal with the present: he despises it and flees from it, the most exotic of Russian poets; hence his love for the Caucasus.

If for Zhukóvsky the outer world scarcely existed, God and poetry were as one, and the "world beyond" made up for the struggles and sorrows here below. If Pushkin achieved,

if not in life at least in his poetry, in which he took refuge from the trials of life, the smoothing over of contradictions, spiritual balance, the objective calm which so impresses us, and which seemed frigid to his romantic contemporaries, for Lermontov there was no bridging over of the gaping antagonisms between the ideal and the real; only earthly troubles were real to him, only momentarily could the return to childishly simple faith ease his heart, laden with doubt and trouble. Instantly the dreadful unsolved questions cropped up, and he departed this life without having even paved the way in his art for the much longed-for atonement, for spiritual peace. His poetry is thus exclusively the poetry of doubt and pessimism, of discontent and protest; and as a God gave him words to say what he suffered, his contemporaries winced and shuddered under his reproaches and outcries.

To be sure, his poetry is mainly egotistical, owing to his own world-weariness, as also to his high romantic estimate of the poet. This estimate he compares to a Circassian's dagger, which when unadorned was once its master's true servant in battle, and now hangs a mere ornament in a gilded sheath. "Thus did the poet once in battle fire others; his voice was needful to the mass as the goblet to the meal or incense to the altar. There floated over the crowd the echo of noble thoughts like the bells of the tocsin in days of danger or disaster, but thy simple proud speech was tedious to us. We desire deceit and gauds: the poet is despised, the blade rusted." And the fate of the "Prophet" in his last poem of 1841? He whom God inspired, who dared to proclaim pure doctrine of love and truth, must flee mankind and dwell in the wilderness, despised, pointed out as a warning example to children when he does hasten through the streets. Accordingly, in the "Dialogue between a Writer, a Journalist, and a Reader," a variation on one of Pushkin's themes, the poet asks, "What shall I write? The promptings of enthusiasm, when on the strong thoughts the words string themselves like beads, the world through the glorious dream seems transfigured, but will laugh at them and forget. The promptings of sleepless nights when reproaches gnaw at me,

when I, inexorable and hard, despise vice under the mask of virtue, will conjure up for me hatred and anger, or even lead the weak astray."

And yet he did hesitate to do it. Particularly in the noble lament "On the Death of the Poet" (Pushkin), which suddenly made his name known, when he alone boldly said out what others scarcely dared shyly to hint at. He was the mouthpiece of the public conscience.

"Perished is the poet, slave of honour,
He fell by rumour slanderèd;
With lead in breast and thirst for vengeance
He downward drooped his haughty head.
The Poet's soul could not endure
Of petty slights the shameful pain;
He rose against what pleased the world,
Lone as before, and he is slain.

* * * * *

The murderer with icy blood—
Rescue was barred—his aim could take;
An empty heart beats evenly,
His hand the pistol does not shake.
What wonder? From some distant state,
Like hundreds of such tramps in chase
Of fortune or official place,
He drifted now by will of fate.
The sounds of wondrous lays are still,
Such shall be heard again not yet,
Narrow and grim the singer's home,
And on his lips a seal is set.
But as for you, ye insolent descendants
Of sires well known for famous hospitude,
Who with your slavish heels have trampled down
What's left of names brought low by play of chance—
You that in greedy throng stand round the throne,
Hangmen of freedom, genius, and fame—
You hid beneath the shelter of the law,
Before you right and justice, all be dumb.
But God has Justice, minions of vice,
He has an awful Justice and she waits;
She cannot be approached with chink of gold,
And she beforehand knows both thoughts and deeds.
In vain then will you run to calumny,

It will not help you any more;
You will not wash away with all the dirty flood
Of your black gore
The murdered poet's righteous blood."

Stronger chords no Russian poet has struck.

And not less severely did he sit in judgment on his own generation in the "Dúma" ("A thought") of almost the same date.

"To good and bad alike disgracefully indiff'rent,
We starting our career shall fade without a fight,
In face of perils we are shamefully discouraged,
And, despicable slaves, bow to the face of might.

* * * * *

The hate and love we feel are both but accidental,
We sacrifice deny to hate and love in turn;
There reigns within our soul a kind of secret coldness,
E'en though within our blood the iron burn.

* * * * *

A gloomy, visaged crowd and soon to be forgotten,
We shall go through the world without a voice or trace;
No fructifying thought, no work begun with genius,
Shall we throw forward for the race.
Posterity as judge and citizen with harshness
Our ashes shall insult in some contemptuous verse,
As bitter jibes a son, deceived and disappointed,
Over a spendthrift father's hearse."

Such notes, however, are rare and isolated. Particularly must we mention also, with its burning pathos, the "Last Transfer," on the removal of Napoleon's body to Paris, where he would fain say to the French:—

"Thou empty, miserable nation . . .
And if the leader's spirit haste to see
The new tomb where his ashes lie, in him
What indignation at the sight shall boil!
How much he will regret in weary grief
The parching island under distant skies
Where guarded him, like him invincible,
And great like him, the Ocean."

Even Russians, and amongst them Pushkin, were no strangers to the Napoleon-worship of the age.

To native glory he but once did honour in his "Borodinó," where in a popular strain a hero, let us say from Túshin's Battery in "Peace and War," plainly, yet vigorously, tells us of the ever memorable struggle, "where the enemy tasted not a little what the Russian's desperate fighting means—his fighting hand to hand." In other ways, he loves his home with wondrous love.

"I love my country, but with a strange love,
This love my reason cannot overcome:
'Tis not the glory bought at price of blood,
Nor quiet, full of haughty confidence,
Nor dark antiquity's untouched traditions,
That move in me a happy reverie.
But I do love, why I know not myself,
The cold, deep silence of my country's fields,
Her sleeping forests waving in the wind,
Her rivers flowing widely like the sea.
I love to haste through byways on a cart,
And with slow gaze piercing the shade of night,
And sighing for night's lodging, on each side
To meet the twinkling lights of wretched thorpes.
I love the smoke above the parching harvest
The nomad train of waggons on the steppe,
And on the hill amid the yellow crops,
A single pair of birches shining white.
I see with joy that many cannot know
A well-filled rickyard and a wooden cabin
Straw-thatched with window shutters neatly carved;
And of a saint's day in the dewy eve
Till midnight I am ready to look on
At dancing, with the stamping and the yells
Accompanied by drunken peasant's talk."

But similar scenes pleased Pushkin also most in Russia. In return the Caucasus enticed Lérmontov. Here he will portray in "Valerík" a warlike episode, there make the mother sing by the cradle of the little Cossack her song, which tells of her great trouble. He will in bold personification make the mountains pass in review the countless hordes of the White Tsar, and sing of the "Gifts of Terek."

In one respect Lérmontov does not differ from the Pushkin Pleiad: he is a subjective poet and a lyrical above all. The life around him is taken into account only quite by exception. He for the most part keeps aloof from it, like Zhukóvsky and Pushkin before him, and Baratýnsky and Yazýkov at the same time. Hence also the narrowness of the circle out of which he rarely steps; quite unlike the sorcerer Pushkin, who tries his hand at all possible forms, styles, and matters, and embodies himself in all possible shapes of the world's literature, Lérmontov remains always the same. Hence the question of his independence of foreign models, *i.e.*, Byron—to Pushkin he owed but little, the first impulse, say—is rather superfluous, firstly, because he was great without Byron, because there applies to him what Baratýnsky sang of another favoured of God:—

> "When I discover thee, inspired Mickiewicz,
> At Byron's feet, I think, 'Abased admirer,
> Arise; bethink thee, thou'rt thyself a god.'"

Secondly, because his so-called "Byronism," his weariness of the world, is not borrowed or temporary, as with Pushkin or Mickiewicz, but genuine and permanent; Byron only made it easier for him to find the outward moulding for it, the expression and form. Anyhow, let us distinguish between Lérmontov the novice and the master. If even as a boy of fourteen or fifteen he sings amain his lack of feeling, his disillusionment, his satiety of the world and all its vices, and his longing for the lost innocence of childhood, these are but fruits of his reading, reminiscences, morbid witchery of his fancy; even the obstinacy with which he fairly hangs on like a bulldog to themes once, often early, chosen by him, showed how much they were congenial to his temperament. This is especially true of the "Demon," in which he has taken a very ordinary Romantic subject, the love of a demon for a mortal woman, who is betrayed into loving him by her pity for the fallen angel —Alfred de Vigny's "Eloa" was very near akin—and localised it in the Caucasus through his heroine Tamára. He began to work at it in 1829, and kept on up to 1840, going back and

remodelling or adding to it. The lad already identified himself with the demon. "Like my demon, I am the elect of the Evil One; like him, I have a haughty spirit, and am among men a careless wanderer, a stranger as in heaven so on earth." And in 1841 he confessed, "My youthful mind used to be disturbed by a mighty figure; among the other visions he gleamed like an Emperor, silent and proud, in such enchantingly fair beauty that it was terrible, and my soul shuddered painfully. This wild dream pursued my mind for many years, but when I had dismissed the other illusions I rid myself of him by verse." The latter statement outran the facts, for Lérmontov never got quit of his demon. He remained proud, strong, and passionate like him, and knew as little as he how to press towards a particular goal. To be sure, in Nicholas's time there was no goal except the table of rank. From his path, which led nowhere, he allowed himself repeatedly to be drawn astray by the passion which the sight of the beautiful and the innocent kindles. Only Eloa would have gone near to converting her demon to repentance and God. Lérmontov's was less pliant, although he, too, is by no means Byron's Lucifer or Satan in person, no embodiment of evil, denial, or rebellion, only the defiantly unyielding spirit, who will not bend his back—a very appropriate ideal for that age of lackeys.

We are thus in the fullest tide of Romanticism, which in Russia had hitherto had nothing similar to record; hence the strong impression which the copies of the "Demon" evoked. The Censorship did not sanction its printing till well on into the sixties. The exceptional nature of the matter was enhanced by the unusualness of the form. Such pomp and splendour of versification or descriptions Pushkin hardly knew. And at these romantic themes, with one and the same localising in the Caucasus, the poet's epic strain halted. In the manuscript "Izmail Bey," the Circassian, disgusted by civilisation and its hollowness, returns to his mountains: a renegade from his own in everything, religion and the rest, he will still fight for their freedom though without hope, since he knows it is bound to perish. Izmail, the hero, bears plainly the Byronic

lineaments, even to the trampling on women's hearts. The poet sinned particularly against all reality in the "Boyar Órsha." Polevóy was thereby thoroughly justified when he prescribed in his "New Painter" as a receipt for a new poem: "Take the contents of the 'Giaour,' shift the scene to the Caucasus, put at the beginning the dialogue between Romeo and Juliet, then bring in Mignon abducted by the Circassians." However the scene of "Órsha," for a wonder, was not laid among the Circassians, where, to be sure, it might have been more possible.

For all these uncompleted attempts that often failed in the conception we are repaid by that pearl "Mtsýri," or "The Novice." The theme of a man caged in a monastery and longing for freedom had already been touched on by Lérmontov in "Orsha," and whole verses of it transferred to "The Novice," as it was not intended for publication. Some Russians have handed over the orphan little Circassian to the monks to educate. Within these loveless, gloomy walls he grows up, yearning day and night for freedom, a prisoner like Lérmontov himself and most of his heroes. At an unguarded moment he flees, genuinely without an object, to his own people in the mountains; then after three days' wandering, privations, and struggles with savage beasts, he returns to the monastery with the seeds of death in his breast. We listen to the confession of a dying youth. The plot could not be more simply conceived; it has but one character, for the image of a fair one only rustles by as a dream ideal, but what treasures of descriptive poetry, what a burning glow in the passionate laments of the novice! Pushkin, too, described the Caucasus, but how colourless and poor are the tints of his palette compared with this ample splendour of colour! There lay the novice, weary to death, in the scorching mid-day glow, the deepest silence and lifelessness around, save that a snake, rustling in the dry brushwood, gliding along with its yellow back like a sword-blade covered with golden damascening, furrowing the loose sand, slid cautiously. Now playing and toying over him, it wound itself in a threefold spiral, now flung away as if singed, darted and hid itself in

the broad bushes. In the heat of fever, like to perish of thirst, he dreamed he lay in a stream and was sipping the cold water. Fishes played over him; one nestled to him or circled over his head and sang with a silvery voice, "My child, stay here with me; in the water is pleasant life, coolness, and rest. I will call my sisters together: in a mazy dance will we delight thy dim glance and weary spirit [*cf.* "The Erlking"]. Fall into slumber; soft is thy couch, transparent the coverlet. To the rustle of wondrous dreams years shall pass by, nay, centuries. O sweet one, I disguise it not that I love thee, love as the free wave, love as my life."

The youthful dramas of the poet betray no especial dramatic talent. Lérmontov was too subjective to clothe himself in alien shapes, accordingly he makes only the principal figure, *i.e.*, himself, stand out clearly; the others are merely shadows. An interesting fact about them is that after a quite romantic tragedy, of course from the Promised Land of Romance, Spain, the poet turns to native actuality and his own family quarrel, although he swells it out tragically at pleasure, thus in a play trenching on actuality, which he elsewhere studiously avoids. Here Schiller and "The Robbers" come by their rights, one of the plays even bearing a German title, "Men and Passions." But side by side with tirades like Karl Moor's we have utterances more pregnant, as in the meeting of students, where to the question, "When will the Russians become Russians?" Cheláev answers, "When they go back together a hundred years and fashion themselves afresh and on sound lines," a repudiation of the St. Petersburg period, which would come from the heart of every Slavophile. The latest of these plays, "The Masquerade," shows considerable progress, and was after some years put on the stage, but its hero is again only the demon. He has no wishes and no hopes left, but has been banished from the circle of noisy life with the unbearable memory of the irrevocable years, a gloomy, crazed sufferer. Even the crowning loss of his loving and beloved wife he bears with contemptuous indifference—in the second edition. In the first he (Arbenin) avenged the supposed unfaithfulness of his wife by murder.

But totally different from all these variations of the same character proved the "Song of the Tsar Ivàn Vasílievich, the young 'Oprichnik' (life-guardsman) and the bold merchant Kaláshnikov," 1837. The merchant avenges the honour of his wife on the "Oprichnik," and is executed, a vision of the past as clear and distinct as is scarcely attained by the "Borís Godunóv" which Karamzín prompted, told in such a popular strain, after the manner of the "Byliny," that none of Pushkin's ballads, not to mention Zhukóvsky or Rylêev, at most some few of the popular legends, remind us of this genuineness of native style and spirit. It strikes us as if this were a mere *tour de force*, as if Lérmontov only wanted to show how his poetry can master even objective and realistic portraiture, if only drawn from times long gone by.

Lérmontov is further distinguished from the Romantics by his love for despised prose. Zhukóvsky and Pushkin, not to mention others, could not make up their minds to it. Pushkin did indeed leave behind him short stories and novels, *i.e.*, the outlines of such, but he executed very little. He also, for the most part, let it lie for years in his portfolio, and it did not become known till after his death; only as a journalist and critic did he condescend to prose. Lérmontov, apart from a youthful play in prose, will renounce without more ado the language of the gods and his Byron, unlike "Onêgin," for themes of the day. The "Hero of Our Day," which was preceded by an incomplete tale akin to it, he completed and published in 1839; a promised sequel never appeared. The story at once came out in a new edition, and excited greater interest than the poet's verses. The coming reign of Prose was already proclaiming itself.

This is the first Russian psychological novel, for Gógol's "Dead Souls" is not psychology, and Pushkin's are rather anecdotes. It was a story of good society such as Marlínsky and Sologúb wrote, although watering-places in the Caucasus and garrisons were hardly the proper meeting-place of such society. To be sure, Pechórin, the "Hero," found his way there accidentally. It is also, properly speaking, no novel, but a series of episodes from the life of a young man,

hence it could be continued at pleasure. We learn nothing of the past, we have no idea of the future of the hero; we only make acquaintance with him at a certain point or turning-point of his life. None the less, we are in doubt about nothing, for Pechórin is Lérmontov as he was in 1839, and as such the public took him, and saw in the work the author's own experiences. It was in vain that he protested against this in his Preface to the second edition, and declared that Pechórin was not the portrait of an individual, but pieced together out of the vices of that whole generation in their full development. He wanted to draw the man of the day as to his own misfortune he had so often encountered him. He would only point out this disease, but how it was to be healed God alone knew. In reality there was no escape from Pechórin's hopelessness.

The hero is a Byron in a Russian cloak, *i.e.*, without any trace of a political, nay, social mission, which very greatly narrows of itself the English original type. He is disillusioned, but has got used to that disillusionment, deliberately resigned to any future, lives passively, or more properly vegetates. And yet the powers he feels within himself show him that he was born to something higher. His best qualities, his love of the truth and the world, for want of response and comprehension, change into their opposites. The poet makes the heroes of his youthful dramas and Ismail Bey alike make the same confession. "As he was removed from deceit he was deceived, and only dreaded to trust because he had once believed everything." Now he hides tame and nerveless despair behind a pleasant smile; what matter men's sorrows and joys to him who is indifferent to all save himself? He lives only for himself out of sheer habit. He lives out of sheer curiosity; he forbids himself all sympathy; he becomes a fatalist. Out of the furnace of passion he has issued hard and cool as iron, but without the fairest hue of life, the foible of noble impulses. Now he plays at best the part of the axe in the hands of Fate. That is all Pechórin in reality. As a contrast to him is opposed Grushnítsky in "Princess Mary," the romantic poser, who wished to be all that, who wished to garb himself seriously

in unusual feelings, lofty passion and exclusive distress, merely in order to become the hero of a novel, and impressed this so often on others that at last he became convinced of it himself: a sort of involuntary self-criticism by Pechórin Lérmontov. But Pechórin is by no means a spiteful man, although he often seems to feed on the pains of others. He is thoroughly capable of noble feelings; he makes himself out worse than he really is. His chief defect is at bottom only "cette froide ironie, qui se glisse dans mon âme irrésistiblement, comme l'eau qui entre dans un bateau brisé," as we find in a letter of the poet's of 1835.

Whether there was any escape for the poet and which way he might have chosen we cannot well say—he might quite well have given up Literature altogether. For, unfortunately, his own words apply far better to himself than to Pushkin :—

> "The sounds of wondrous lays are still,
> Such shall be heard again not yet;
> Narrow and grim the singer's home,
> And on his lips a seal is set."

With Lérmontov Russian song became silent for decades; it had lost the ear of the nation, which now thought of other things.

Almost at the same time Russia's greatest folk-poet was carried to the grave. With him was rolled up a picture out of darkest Russia, where all mental activity, if not directly aiming at earning money, was exposed to the greatest distrust and hindrances of all kinds. Koltsóv, son of a petty tradesman and cattle-dealer, was at the District School at Vorónezh only initiated into the elements, so remained quite uncultured. As companion to his father he learned to know the people and their songs, and his own troubles made him all the more receptive of melodious versification, the secrets of which he slowly acquired, so that he soon tried his hand at the like, and was able to get single poems into papers, until a young Mæcenas, Stankiévich, made it possible for him to have printed a whole small volume of songs (1835). By this, Koltsóv suddenly became known, nay, in high request. He

now exerted himself to make up for lost ground, and lend his fresh natural songs a philosophical meaning, which succeeded but ill. The greatest ill-success in contending with his own family, coupled with a health early undermined, put a premature end to the Russian Burns in 1842.

The taste for the national song, historical as well as lyrical, had been aroused long before him. The famous collection of Kirshá Danílov, which even Lérmontov knew, furnished the basis for the "Byliny," which were first amplified by the rich finds in the North-West, in the Government of Olónets, by Rýbnikov, and later by Hilferding. Songs of the people, or what purported to be such, had found their way into the manuscript song books of the eighteenth century and the first printed ones. They guided Trediakóvsky in his metre and were imitated even by Sumarókov. More successful were the contributions of Prince Neledínsky-Melétsky, Professor Merzlakóv, and lastly Baron Délvig. To be sure, these were rather foreigners in Russian garb. The shortness of the metre was imitated and there was no rhyme. The parallel between Nature and individual feelings was strictly carried out, *e.g.*—

> "Sang, sang the bird | and fell silent,
> The heart knew of joys | and forgot them.
> Why, singer bird, | fell'st thou silent?
> How, heart, cam'st thou | to know black grief?"

People sang these ballads, which only outwardly caught the tone of the people, very generally, and artless souls persuaded themselves of their being of the soil. It was Koltsóv first, who once admired Délvig and imitated him, that destroyed this illusion and produced songs that were not only curled in Russian fashion, but seemed sprung from the very feelings of the people. He did not trouble himself about the parallelism of form project. The mincing sugariness of those ballads he avoided altogether. As little did he fall into a whining strain of lament for the hard life of the peasant, but refrained from sentimental catching at effect. Even when sore trouble presses him to the earth his peasant remains firm and free, as if

serfdom and slavery had glanced without a trace past his mental aspect. Joy in life and courage to live speak out of every song, as it cannot fail to be with the mighty people, for it is as if grown one with the earth, lives and loves with it: the tilling of the soil with its phases regulates not only its activity but its feeling. How his heart shrinks when long drought weighs upon his land; how willingly he offers tapers to the picture of the Mother of God, if only he may at last bring home a rich harvest; how he feels his loneliness on the dark, cold days; how full of hope he fares afield in spring! And if he complains that he was born on an unlucky day, at a fatal hour, without the "shift of luck," because the rich old curmudgeon has refused the powerful, energetic youth his fair daughter, yet he buys himself a new scythe—not to cut his throat with: he is going to the Don, to its rich "slobodás" (villages), where the variegated steppe spreads to the Black Sea:—

"As a guest to thee
Not alone I come;
One of two come I,
With my scythe so keen.
Long ago I wished
To and fro to stroll
On the grassy steppe
With my scythe so keen.
Shoulder, stir yourself;
Swing you out, my arm.
Blow you in my face,
Wind from out the south;
Freshen into waves
All the steppe's expanse.
Scythes begin to swish,
Glitter all about:
Rustle, grass mown down;
Flowers, bow you low:
Bow your heads to earth.
With the grass you'll pine,
As for Grunya I
Pine in prime of youth.
Many cocks I'll rake,
Many ricks I'll pile,

Cossack's wife will give
Both hands full of coin :
I'll sew up the gold,
I will keep the gold,
Come back to the thorpe
Straight to the village Head.
Could not move his heart
By my poverty ;
I shall move his heart
By my golden coin !"

Even the reproaches to the sluggard who lets everything go to rack are not without a humorous strain, as if everything might easily improve would the peasant but bethink himself. Yes, even the quite forsaken is not embittered ; he sits at the table and ponders how the lonely man lives in the world. The young man has no young wife, he has no trusty friend, no treasure of gold, no warm corner, no plough or harrow, no plough-horse. "Together with poverty my father bequeathed me only one gift, great strength, and even that, as if by design, bitter necessity has already made me wholly expend among strangers."

These songs breathe a hearty hopefulness, a love of life, a strength which we should seek in vain among the educated, in Lérmontov or Pushkin. The endurance of the agricultural people, which on its broad shoulders has calmly borne through the centuries the Tartar yoke and the bureaucrats' yoke, the unfavourableness of the weather or the blows of fate, the whims of masters or the vexations of the Village Elder, its optimism, which seems to us frivolity ; its resignedness, which reminds us of Eastern fatalism—all these have found in these songs, with the interchange of rural occupations, their poetical expression. To be sure Koltsóv's range of vision is narrow, if one may call the steppe which it embraces narrow. His wings refuse their office when he determines on a philosophical flight, questions of existence and such. But this "home," for which Pushkin's and Lérmontov's hearts alone beat, this savour of the harvest, these swelling crops, the holiday delight of the

peasants, we find illumined by poetry only in Koltsóv. These are Russian idylls, after the diction of which artificial poetry strove in vain. Because he sang what he knew—Nature and men, for which alone he had eye, ear, and heart—the peasant poet, long before Prose ventured on it, gave us a vivid, even if idealised, picture of the struggling and resting, hoping and suffering, of the simple Russian on his broad expanse of land. He was the first that brought the husbandman into Literature and added the national touch which in previous Literature, even that of Pushkin and Lérmontov, we have missed almost everywhere. These either gave us themselves, *i.e.*, quite definite individuals, or imitated what was exotic. Koltsóv portrayed the Russian peasant, especially of the more southern districts, with their richer nature and freer men, and once again Poetry sped ahead of Prose. Soon the peasant and his songs, and the debt which the cultivated had to discharge to him in the greatest rural and pastoral empire in the world, were to become the centre of all planning and all endeavour. Russia's new birth and modernisation were inseparable from the emancipation of almost nine-tenths of her population. During this process it was no longer Poetry, but the realism and naturalism of comedy and above all of the novel, of artistic Prose and its criticism, that were to take over the leading part.

CHAPTER VIII

THE NOVEL AND GÓGOL

The satirical and historical novel of Bulgárin and Zagóskin, Marlínsky and Polevóy—Comedy—Restricting influence of the Censorship—Gógol, his youthful works—The divine laughter of the "Revizór" and "Dead Souls"—Gógol's turn towards religion—The verdicts of his contemporaries.

It was not till the thirties that Russian original novels began to satisfy the home-bred desire for reading, which hitherto had had to put up with translations. The quite isolated and in part not properly appreciated phenomena of an Izmáilov, and yet more a Narêzhny, neither had any cohesion nor created a literary tradition. True, there was not very much that was original about the new novels, nay, such a bold attempt as the half satirical, half allegorical novel of Narêzhny, which for the sake of its author's safety was not published till after his death —"The Year of Disaster; or, The Princes of the Mountains," 1829, professedly laid in Georgia, but portraying Russians at work—was not again undertaken. The new novel was for the most part either the old moralisingly satirical one or the historical romance after the manner of Scott, in both cases with a most complicated plot, with all possible extraordinary complications, for the gratification of the artless reader, whose curiosity was kept at the greatest tension. In both manners shone the renegade Pole Bulgárin, now long forgotten, but about 1830 so popular that he shared with Pushkin the favour of the reading public. His satirico-moral *chef d'œuvre* was "Ivàn Výzhigin," 1829; his main object "well-disposed satire, for

the blooming of which in Russia our wise Government has always been labouring," *i.e.*, that which always laughed, which took exception to trifles and passed timidly by what was important, with constant compliments for the ever-watchful eye of sage and just authority. About the peasant question Bulgárin, since he dragged his hero all through Russia, could not of course keep dead silence. He solved it by belauding the model establishment of Mr. Rossiáninov—the name being chosen because every "Rossiánin" should be so with his teachers, M. Instruit and Herr Gutmann, for all the names are as yet labels. The joy of the "right-minded" author at his success with "the Russians, who excel all the world in reason, kindness, and gratitude," was somewhat embittered by the epigrams of Pushkin, to whom Bulgárin was only a police terrier and Výzhigin an ox, as also the parodies of the poor parasite Orlóv, who traced the genealogy of the latter back to Vánka Kain, the arch-brigand. On the other hand, his patriotical novels, although they reeked of patriotism, had no success—they were far too commonplace for that; here others hit the bull's-eye.

Zagóskin passed from comedy to the novel. His "Yúri Miloslávsky" was received with enthusiasm, at least by the public, passed through eight editions in twenty years, and has frequently been translated. Turgénev and even Alexander III. grew enthusiastic over this novel, which was sentimental and patriotic but not historical. Its popularity was insured by the love intrigue, the smaller characters, such as the servant Kírsha, more interesting than his master Yúri, and the crazy beggar, Mítya, with their pithy language. The attempt to treat the events of 1812 in "Róslavlev; or, The Russians in 1812" in the same way turned out a good deal less interesting, and "Áskold's Barrow," which went back to the times of Vladímir the Great, was also the grave of Zagóskin's fame. He went back later to the theatre, also writing new novels on the days of Peter the Great, wherein as a true Moscovite, hater of everything foreign—it was not for nothing that his forebears came from the Golden Horde—he

idealised the adherents of the old *régime*. He is interesting as the first, and for that matter quite artless, glorifier of patriotic and rural Old Russianism in his comedies, warning his aristocrats against the capital and its extravagance, as well as against foreign countries and their ideas; when they are abroad he makes them anxious for their country; in his great work "Moscow and the Moscowites," he plays the enthusiastic cicerone of the "city of the first throne." Quite his opposite is Kúkolnik, in whose novels the Tories of the eighteenth century are all scoundrels, while the virtuous heroes are to be found among the fashionable youth. Otherwise the two could shake hands as writers of plays and novels, yet in the endless stories of Kúkolnik are represented mainly foreign themes, Lithuanian, Prussian, French, and so on. More sympathetic than either was the merchant's son, Lazhéchnikov, who, after his "Memoirs of a Russian Officer," 1812–15, depicting his own experiences and impressions, took his most readable productions from the eighteenth century, *e.g.*, "The Ice-palace," though to be sure he did not get much beyond the purely material interest of a skilfully-woven intrigue. Although a writer of the old school, he retained understanding and feeling for the new, and was one of the few that frankly welcomed it. The most interesting of them all, and for a long time the favourite story-teller, was the talented, versatile, passionate Bestúzhev. A brilliant officer of the Guards and conqueror of hearts, to whom even as a political "criminal" at Yakútsk and private soldier in the Caucasus the ladies' hearts flew directly, he concerned himself, apart from his fair ones, only with literature, and found himself among the Decembrists much like Pilate in the Creed. His literary activity, which he began in St. Petersburg, particularly as a critic and romancer, he carried forward in exile and from the seat of war as "Marlínsky." Unlike his fellows, he wrote no novels in several volumes, and soon abandoned the historical line—in which he, again in contrast to Zagóskin and his kind, handled not Russian, but Lapland and other subjects ("Leave the Germans and turn to us, the Orthodox," Pushkin begged him)—so as to depict contempo-

rary social life. He also dealt in the Oriental, borrowed from the Caucasus, in "Ammalat Beg," "Mullah Nûr," and the like. "Marlínsky" is perfect Romanticism in prose; each of his tales a crackling firework; the heroes of the most uncurbed and wildest passionateness; the diction of an exaggeration that might at times pass as a successful parody on the Romantic style, if it was not all meant most seriously. The cramped and forced expression, his constant hyperboles, and the heroes with their incredible outbursts of feeling, impressed the public directly, and besides there was in it a good slice of the author, his own vehemence and own bravery—he was soon afterwards (1837) so cut to pieces by Circassian sabres that the body could not be found—his own love of women; what seems impossible to us was mostly genuine. Yet there were not wanting in his literary remains simpler narratives as well; his undisputed speciality was in soldier stories in which, beside the officer, for the first time the private was faithfully depicted with his doings and ways. In this genre he remained unsurpassed up to the time of Tolstoy's Sebastopol sketches. The abundance of these dramatic portraitures, in all possible variations of place and time, is quite astonishing.

In spite of many temporary successes, the most to be pitied of all these writers of tales was Polevóy, who was a born journalist, but had his magazine suppressed for a sensible criticism on a play of Kúkolnik's, equally stupid and patriotic, and so much esteemed in St. Petersburg. As a poor plebeian who trembled before every tax-collector, to earn a livelihood for him and his he was by the unfavourable circumstances of the period driven into the career of a literary potboiler, a purveyor of sham novels and dramas. What to him was much worse, but lately the leader of the young generation, of the literary revival, he now saw himself overtaken and forced back into the ranks of his worst enemies on one level with Bulgárin and Senkowski; for, like Marlinsky, up to the last moment, he held high the flag of the old, artless Romanticism: his heroes remained the eccentric and misunderstood characters which rebel against barriers and prejudices. He sets himself against the new current of the age, which tends towards actual

fact and cannot understand it. To this narrowness is added his productivity, in which he wholly buried a not inconsiderable talent. He was even not wanting in humour and irony, as his *Painter* of 1832, a collection of essays in the manner of the old Nóvikov satirical journal, shows sufficiently, in which he cuts up squires, officials—one sketch anticipated the "Revizor"—ladies, and more particularly literary men and literature, which he would not take seriously—to expect literature of folks who could hardly read! Proper insight also marked his best historical story, "The Oath at the Lord's Sepulchre" (in Jerusalem), a comprehensive picture of Russia in the fifteenth century and the struggles for the throne of Moscow between Basil the Blind and Shemiaká, with the mysterious character of the Singer, forming the centre of the action, the only fictitious one in the story, which otherwise adheres fairly strictly to history. In deliberate opposition to the over-abundance of the love story in "Yúri," Polevoy followed after the "Cinq-Mars" of de Vigny and after Scott, pushed the love-making quite into the background, and tried to infuse into language and manners the life of the seventeenth century from the farmer's croft to the Kremlin at Moscow. Interesting is his uncompleted artist-novel "Abbadonna," received on its first appearance in 1835 by the critics, notably Bêlínsky, with ecstasy, whereas at the second edition the same Bêlínsky sneered—things went fast in Russia then. It was not his only story of artist life: his contemporaries were enthusiastic above all over the contrast between him who fell from heaven and the child of earth, between the ever dissatisfied idealist and the prose of his environment. But Polevóy made his "Abbadonna," in which the artist Reichenbach tried in vain to rescue the actress Eleanora out of the slough of despond, take place in Germany at any rate: Kúkolnik, on the other hand, put in the mouth of the dying Tasso verses on the future greatness of Russia, and those Derzhávin's.

A quite different attitude was adopted by Prince Odoévsky. By family the last of a branch of Rurik's descendants, he belonged to the highest circles, not only in literature: his knowledge, his intelligence, his humane disposition (his

busy philanthropic activity after 1844 totally elbowed aside his literary) make him one of the most fascinating personalities of Russia under Nicholas. His kindly nature made him prefer to cultivate literature for the people and for children, such as "Gaffer Irinei" (Irenæus), but he could also write fairy stories for grown-up children : he preferred allegories, philosophical tales, *e.g.*, in his "Russian Nights," for he, like Venevítinov, was a Moscow disciple of Schelling. He fought against lies in the drawing-room, in society, science, the throwing of balls from one to another, what the world calls conversation, the grasping at rotten fruits, at distinctions of every kind. He preached morality and humanity in forcible words and images, and showed the topsy-turviness of Bentham's Utilitarianism and of a world on the Malthusian plan. He often reminds one of Hoffmann ; music particularly attracted him and he did special service to the history of Russian music and the practice of sacred song : he also delighted in choosing great musicians, Bach and Beethoven, for his stories. This ingenious writer has quite undeservedly been forgotten : his somewhat old-fashioned way of writing hides treasures of enlightened sentiment. To the last he remained true to his Liberal tenets. Only shortly before his death (1869) he adjured the Emperor to persevere in the work of reform.

The society novel, mostly only in the form of short stories about all sorts of drawing-room lions and lionesses, was cultivated by Bestúzhev-Marlinsky, and somewhat later Count Sologúb, a cool and accurate observer of the "great world," who only in his Tarantas or "Travelling-carriage" dipped deeper, showing us a meeting between representatives of the old and new Russia, the simple backwoodsman stout Basil and the lean Frenchy Ivàn, a prey to reflection, thus putting Russia regularly through an inspection from two sides. The modern novel found representatives also among the first women-writers, of whom one, Helena Hahn, who imitated Georges Sand, championed woman and the rights of her down-trodden feelings, but only ventured to draw heroines of patient suffering, not of protest.[1] Extraordinary was the fate of Pávlov, who by

[1] *V. supra.* His *Moscow Telegraph* was stopped for criticising this play.

his "Three Tales" secured the favour of the public and the hand of a rich lady and poetess, Katharina Jähnisch, while incurring the displeasure of the Censorship and the Emperor. Nicholas declared that for the future the author might be recommended to describe Caucasia and such distant regions. He had actually ventured to clap ideas of insubordination into the heads of his heroes, serfs and soldiers—nay more, one of them even killed his unjust superior. Somewhat apart from the throng of these elegant writers stood Dahl, "Kazák Lugánsky," the eminent authority on the Russian people and its life. His great collection of proverbs was not passed by the Censorship and the "improper" words were expurgated from his great dictionary; side by side with this learned activity he developed a profuse one as a novelist, and wrote a crowd of peasant, soldier, official, and other sketches, distinguished by their photographic exactness, but in the end did not rise above anecdotic matter. Stories of the people were told for the most part in a sentimental strain, in country idylls, such as those of Little Russia by Osnovyanénko.

Dramatic literature was far poorer. The repertoire still consisted almost entirely of translations and imitations, mostly of the flimsiest type. Thus for some time the vaudeville entirely held the stage: Griboêdov's Repetílov could still say with the fullest conviction, "Yes, the vaudeville is something; all the rest is foolery." The representatives of it, Prince Shakovskóy, Khmelnítsky and others, were forgotten again in the forties. And the same fate attended their comedies or those of Zagóskin: the "kvass-patriot" (pot-house) Kúkolnik and his play, "The Hand of the Almighty saved our Country" (in 1612 from the Poles), which in 1831, after the taking of Warsaw, furnished the watchword, "Let us roll in Polish blood." A couplet of the day declared, "The hand of the Almighty worked three miracles: it saved the country, brought the poet into vogue, and put an end to Polevóy." Lastly there was Polevoy, who trod resolutely in Kúkolnik's steps, and became stage-purveyor to the Alexandra Theatre, erected in 1831. Dramatisations of novels were furnished by Shakovskóy. "Thirty Years of the Life of a Player," the

greatest of scenic successes, was translated by Zótov, who, as inexhaustible as Polevóy, also dealt in sensational and sentimental novels. In spite of the more stirring state of the stage, dramatic literature was decidedly on the decline: the best of it, perhaps, was in the never-acted comedies of the Little Russian, Osnovyanénko, "Elections of Nobles" and "The Stranger from the Capital; or, Confusion in the District Town," with its slight satirical trend, with its typical figures of the people, the wily village clerk, Shelménko, with the rabble of small gentry and officials. The latter piece reminds one forcibly of the "Revizor," and may rank as its prototype; its Pustolóbov is like Khlestakóv, and so forth.

The first Russian comedy after the satire of Griboêdov and the first novel of manners, the first products of the realistic, or, as Bulgárin soon called it, "natural" tendency, are the work of Gógol. In order to do justice to them we need to make a short excursion into a province lying somewhat apart from elegant literature itself, its furthering or hindrance by factors other than literary.

To the former belonged the lavish patronage of the great Empress and her two grandsons. The history of Literature records with gratitude the honours and material support that Derzhávin, Karamzín, Zhukóvsky, Pushkin, Gógol, and others received, which counted doubly in a society to which the moral power, influence, and importance of the writer were still quite problematical. To be sure, in the nineteenth century Literature could exist without patrons even in Russia; the public and the booksellers—*e.g.*, Smirdin in St. Petersburg—took their place. After the success of Zagóskin's "Yuri" Moscow booksellers offered him 40,000 paper roubles for his new and thoroughly bad "Roslavlev." Pushkin asseverated, following in this his then idol, Byron, that he wrote and printed only for the sake of money. No longer Court favour and protection, but talent alone was to decide, and into competition there now entered, in addition to the nobility, which furnished literary men as well as officers and officials, the plebeian, the "Raznochínets" ("roturier"), the merchant's

son or ex-pupil of the ecclesiastical seminaries. The direct advancement of Literature, apart from its indirect gain through schools and the like, was hence no longer a matter of Court and Government: Literature had become independent, of full age, in a material though, unhappily, not in a spiritual respect.

Among the many privileges and prerogatives with which Catherine II. had favoured the nobility, that of free utterance of opinion was not included. As the peasant was physically a serf, so was the nobleman spiritually, *i.e.*, as touching the public voicing of his opinions, and with him the author in all ways a serf. Almost at the same time the chains of both kinds fell, though certainly not with similar results: the peasant became really free in 1861, the writer contents himself to this day with the mere show of freedom (1905). The peasants the Government watched in case they rebelled, suppressing every resistance mercilessly: the Censors did the same for the writers.[1] Every idea or subject which did not please those in power was simply suppressed. Gógol's "Dead Souls" was not allowed to be printed by the Moscow Censorship, for the title, to begin with, was objectionable to it, as it offended against the dogma of immortality. Gógol's one-act piece, "An Official's Morning," might only be printed as "A Man of Affairs' Morning." As in physical so in spiritual serfdom there were milder periods and others when it became almost impossible for decent people to write. Paul's reign was one when the very words "society," "citizen," and "country" were forbidden. The first could not be used at all, while for the others "inhabitant" and "State" might be substituted. To this extreme the Censorship under Nicholas drew near, slowly but constantly, at last warring no longer against writers, works, or ideas, but against words. Thus, for instance, Búlich wrote a scientific study called "Sumarókov and the Satire of his Day," but it appeared with the word "criticism" substituted, whereas in his day there was no criticism, though satire there was. For years

[1] For a good survey of the Russian Censorship and its effect on literature *v.* B. Paris, "Russia and Reform," pp. 260–305. At present (1908) it is very much relaxed.

the very name of the great critic Bêlínsky might not be mentioned: for that matter, during the second half of the nineteenth century Herzen and Chernyshévsky were no better used. To be sure there was an awfully reactionary statute as to the Censorship, framed by the "Slavenish" obscurantist Shishkóv, but even this was infringed, for in Russia laws and statutes exist only for the patient paper and credulous Europe: people act on instructions which run strictly counter to the law. Thus according to the statute the Censor was not allowed to place arbitrary constructions on clear words of the author's, and yet he often devised interpretations of which the author never thought in the remotest way, and forbade his work. A beginner earned money by popular articles, and on one occasion supplied an account of tigers and the hunting of them. It was not allowed to appear because, as it happened, the Tsar was mentioned in the same number. Priests at Moscow complained through that usually humane and enlightened Metropolitan Philaret, a light of the Church, that the Censor had allowed it to pass in Pushkin's "Onêgin" that crows settled on the church cross. The indignant Censor defended himself by saying that it was not his business but the Chief of the Police's to forbid the crows to do so. In view of the exceptional convenience of such suppression, all sorts of Departments, even the Directors of the Stud, hastened to obtain private Censorships, which struck out at pleasure what the ordinary one had made no objection to. In the provinces the Censorship knew no bounds in any way; it actually struck out of the *Gazette* the official notice as to the lowness of the Volga, because it might contain an indirect reflection on the Government and its ceaseless watchfulness. Instead of one or, rather, two—for the Clergy had always exercised its particular right of censure—there were at least ten or twelve Censure-committees which were on the watch for every sensible word. And when after the Revolution year, 1848, although no one had revolted in Russia, a panic seized the limbs of the Government, yet another special committee, Buturlín's, was set up, which was to re-examine already examined literature from "higher" points of view, in order to stamp out every spark

of truth and wit. Already Paul's projects were in sight. That monarch had, in his crazy dread of the Revolution, forbidden the importation of all books and music into the country: now the entire book-trade was to be monopolised. Luckily for Russia, English and French cannon shot to death the *régime* of Nicholas, which just in its last gasps bit around like mad. When its greatest writer and admirer, Gógol, was dead, and his brother lick-spittle, Pogodin, Professor of History at Moscow, ventured to frame the death-notice in the *Moskvityanin* in black, for this and for other equally heinous offences as well he was placed under police supervision.

It was possible at times, to be sure, to snap one's fingers at the Censorship and push a dangerous article through, but the consequences were all the worse. For printing the letter of Chaadáev in which the bitter truth, not indeed about the Government but about Society, was told calmly and with dignity, the periodical was suppressed for ever, the publisher banished, the Censor removed, and Chaadáev declared insane. For the critic Bêlínsky his acquaintance was reserving a pleasant cell in the Fortress of Peter and Paul, and only a merciful death rescued the unhappy man from this Imperial "advancement." On the other hand, there wallowed quite contentedly in this swamp Bulgárin and Gréch, and "Baron Brombæus,"[1] who sneered at everything, especially every serious thought, the Orientalist Senkowski, the Pole who watched over the purity of Russian style and despised Gógol for his "common" diction, verse-writing policemen, and so on—only swine have a special vitality in Russia, complained Gógol. But what have these notes on the Censorship in common with *belles lettres*, and Gógol in particular? Will they not serve as a convenient exculpation of the writer who gathered the thunder-cloud indeed, but whose lightning the Censorship confiscated?

First and foremost, they explain why the first and most inexorable Censor and demolisher of his own work had to be the author. We recorded above a pertinent confession of Griboêdov's. Let us now listen to Gógol: "I was quite

[1] "Growler."

absorbed in a comedy, and how much malice, laughter and wit there was in it! But all of a sudden I pulled up, for I saw that my pen constantly hit on passages which the Censorship would not pass for the world. How will it be, then, if the piece is not acted? A play only lives on the stage, apart from which it is a soul devoid of a body. And what master would show the people an incomplete creation? There is nothing else left for me but to devise the most innocent matter which cannot even affect a Lieutenant of Gendarmes" (Letter to Pogódin, 1833). Thus we have it explained why Gógol chose for his immortal comedy a subject which not even the aforesaid Lieutenant could object to—but even there he was mistaken: his comedy would never have passed the Censor if the Tsar himself had not espoused its cause. Only his intervention made possible the piece in which, as the Tsar said, after the first performance, "all got their share of chastisement, and I most of all." Gógol himself knew the scantiness, the vacuity, of his subject; he knew also Russia's diseased spot—the bureaucracy—especially that of the German "Mamelukes," all the -dorfs, -bergs, and -becks. Under Nicholas, particularly, it had strengthened into terrible power, which levelled and stifled all life and thought. He was the man to say the right word on the matter, but he refrained from it: he chose the smallest thieves and carefully weeded out the great. For what, for instance, is the laughably overwhelming scene of consultation in the "Revizor," with its troubles about the pungent smell of tobacco in the corridors of the little hospital and the broken "Treasury" chair in the High School, as compared with the similar scene in the Moscow Censorship Committee at the examination of "Dead Souls," where one does not know whether the palm of idiocy and infamy inclined towards the Eastern or Western party among the Censors—and there the question was one of the mental pabulum of a great nation! Not Gógol but the Censorship is responsible for the choice of the matter. Gógol wished to put St. Petersburg in the pillory, and contented himself instead with a nameless little town and a nameless hero.

What we are saying of Gógol was true of every writer.

Polevoy's "Abbadonna," to wit, which had its scene in Germany and had nothing to do with Russia, the Censor could not take on his own conscience but went with it to the Minister, who appointed a Commission to examine and report on the work. Objection was taken in the censoral paradise to Baron Kahlkopf (Baldhead) using his power as Minister of State for the carrying through of a private revenge. Under such circumstances one must, of course, only admire the courage and self-sacrifice of the Russian author who guarded his work against all this stupidity and maliciousness, and wonder also that so much was after all accomplished. The mischief which the Government did to Literature through the Censorship and the Censors who were always trembling for their skins cannot at all be estimated, while the alleged benefit can be counted up in pence and farthings—the sum is a very modest one. But let us at last return from this digression to Gógol.

Gógol himself, a tragic personality, is almost more interesting than his works. To the superficial observer he might appear a replica of Tolstoy: the unsurpassable realist repudiates his inestimable talent and becomes an ascetic and a moralist. One might as justly compare him with Turgénev, for, like him, Gógol began with Romantic poems, but soon would not hear his own poetry mentioned, and turned to prose. These and other external facts would explain nothing about Gógol. Russian elegant literature has shown a fondness for dealing with tragic stories of artists. It passed a grave and genuine artist's tragedy heedlessly by—a more affecting one is not known: the cases of Kleist, Grabbe, and others were far more simple. Even in our history, which does not deal with personalities but with tendencies and actual works, we cannot help handling the problem as to why Gógol broke his pen before his time.

Nicolái Vasílievich Gógol was a son of the Ukraine, a Little Russian like the older Narêzhny, and in his own time Grebenka or Osnovyanénko, who not without success tried their hands at satiric, comic, or sentimental stories and pictures, some of them dramatic, from the life of the people, the officials and the gentry of the Ukraine. Ambition, morbid self-

consciousness, and the conviction that he was intended for something great by Providence, drove Gógol from his narrow native surroundings, where life faded away in calm meditation, to St. Petersburg, where he hoped to find his high calling in an official and afterwards in a learned career—without, however, getting any farther, in spite of all conceivable assistance from his friends and patrons: for he was, in sooth, neither official nor professor, but a poet, and was strengthened in his vocation by the contact into which he soon was brought with Pushkin's circle, with Zhukóvsky and the Professor of Literature there, Pletnyóv. Pushkin in particular was a faithful adviser to him. Without him he undertook nothing, to him he owed the materials for his comedy and his novel. He had begun as a sentimental Romanticist with a plaintive Idyll called "Hans Kuchelgarten," which he afterwards pursued, and finally suppressed, with the same hatred as Turgénev did his. The external setting was borrowed from Voss's "Luise," the spirit quite different. For the German hero was Gógol himself, with his nervous restlessness, his unsatisfied impulses, his longing to be out in the wide world, and his disillusionment in face of reality. Only Hans got reconciled to this triviality, and renounced everything in favour of the assurance of quiet domestic happiness by the side of his Luise, of which Nicholas had never thought even remotely, for he had found no Luise, nor, to be sure, sought one.

Petersburg disappointed him: he felt constantly ill at ease there. The city seemed to him to have no character, to be eerily quiet, the inhabitants as if they all had posts and dignities but no wits and no interest in anything beyond their duties. He soon formulated his satirical and humorous aphorisms touching St. Petersburg and Moscow, and was the first to broach the theme which, after him, Vyázemsky, Herzen, Nekrásov, and Dobrolúbov handled, the contrast between the two cities. Moscow seemed to him a bearded Russian noble, Petersburg an adroit European, a precise German. Moscow journals treat of Kant and Schelling, go with the times, and appear after time; those of Petersburg deal only with the public and right-mindedness, do not go with the times, and appear punctually.

Moscow is necessary to Russia, Russia to St. Petersburg. Nay, his aversion for a long time went still farther, was directed against "them," the Russians as opposed to the Little Russians in general, and culminated in denying "them" the Slavonic character which he notably demonstrated by the contrast of the rough, surly Russian and the gentle, mild Slavonic people's song. To be sure such utterances when made are not to be taken literally by a very easily swayed and passionate man like him. He fell in with the views of those about him for the moment only too easily, at least outwardly, while maintaining his inward reserve and his most cherished opinions. This Slavs often do, and so expose themselves to the reproach of insincerity, although it is only cautious holding back their own and a polite, often ironical, assent to the other person's opinion. Thus Mickiewicz and Zaleski were mistaken in Paris when they believed they had discovered in Gogol a keen antipathy to the "Moskály": so too, though to a considerably less extent, the Polish members of the Order of Resurrectionists deceived themselves when they discovered in Gogol the makings of a proselyte to be won over to Catholicism.

At length Gógol stood revealed as what at bottom he had perhaps always been, the thorough-paced advocate of the official programme which in Russia demanded and acknowledged one God, one Tsar, one language, Orthodoxy, Autocracy, one dominant nationality. Yet Gógol's fondness for his Little Russian home, especially during his sojourn in St. Petersburg, 1829–36, cannot be denied. The longing for it simply gnawed at him; and as he tried to conquer his frequent melancholy, nay, hypochondria and spiritual depression, the result of physical malaise, by inventing comical types in the most comical situations, so he raised himself above the vexations of hollow St. Petersburg life, where the climate even was injurious to him, by fleeing in fancy to his southern home, to holy Kíev, to the variegated and delightful Steppe. This longing dictated his sketches in which he depicted its charms of scenery, the cheerful life of the people, and as a Romanticist reproduced their romantic traditions, their fairy tales and legends. Thus arose the Little Russian sketches, at first

appearing separately in magazines, then all together in 1832, "Evenings on a Farm on the Dikánka," followed in 1834 by "Mírgorod" as a continuation. Here already Gógol's double nature came to the fore: his Romanticism rising to the fantastic which takes delight in "supermen," in wonderful adventure, in dreadful crimes, in eerie figures with a touch of the Hoffmann style; on the other hand, realism, a wonderfully true and keen gift of observation which works scientifically and seems only tempered by humour. Especially rich in it—one sees how the realistic tendency was on the increase—was the second collection, with its "Old-fashioned Squires," Philemon and Baucis in the Ukraine—as the life of one ends the other's ends with it—and its "tale of how Iván Ivánovich fell out with Ivàn Niképhorovich," how two bosom friends became deadly enemies through trifles and chance, which with the self-sufficiency and love of litigation of such people led to endless disputes and how these were adjusted. Side by side with them figured the most effective historical novel of the time, "Tarás Búlba," where only the minor figures and the background were really historical while the plot and one principal character, Andrew, and his romantic love for the romantic Polish girl were wholly distorted according to the conventional pattern of romantic love-stories. We are compensated for the crying unreality by scenes detached, a vision of Cossack life which in its intensity was not to be surpassed, and humorous episodes—with Jews, for instance. This was, however, the last tribute that Gógol paid to his own country and her history—that is, her struggles with the Poles, for these alone attracted him; at least, after this he never got beyond mere preparation for an historical novel.

In two later collections, "Arabesques," 1834, and "Tales," 1836, he already struck other chords; he still feels his Romantic preference for the Middle Ages and their Gothic monuments, and the gnawing longing for Italy, the sunny home of the great in Art; he still indulges in unbridled fancy like Hoffmann's, *e.g.*, in "The Portrait"—a story from artist life: a great painter has forgotten in material enjoyment his endeavours after the ideal, and we learn how this

recoils on his work and its owners. But in this and still more in the grotesque tale "The Nose"—which gets lost and wanders about, then reappears—we come also on pearls of realistic comicality and vividness, so too in "The Coach," certainly with a sudden turn to the tragic, and notably in the famous story "The Overcoat." A petty official has after years of privation saved up the necessary sum for a new great-coat. On the first day that he wears it he is deprived of it. The conclusion, with the haunting of a ghost, is again Hoffmann-like. Here for the first time one of the endless Russian gallery of the "Disinherited and Humiliated" has come under the magnifying glass of the observer, and in spite of all his uncouthness, nay, laughableness, has won our deep sympathy. Of this the grotesque conclusion, as if the Romantic author had only trodden the path of realism with hesitation, cannot rob him. It is the same with the "Notes of a Madman."

All Romantic eccentricities disappeared from the acting plays at which Gógol worked for several years; he wrote single scenes, "The Gamblers," "The Servants' Hall," and split up a work that was impossible on account of the Censorship into one-act pieces, "The Lawsuit," "A Man of Affairs' Morning," and "Marriage," in which Councillor Podkolósin by a bold leap from the window escapes entering the harbour of marriage; we are given quite a remarkable gallery of all possible candidates for marriage. At length he completed and put on the stage, after the most exhausting struggles with himself, the Censorship, the actors, the critics, and the public, his "Revizór," only to flee for ever, after the first performances, to his beloved Italy, to his glorious city of the dead, Rome. For at all times Gógol remained conscious of the contrast between the declining Catholic civilisation and his own belonging to a fresh, young, energetic people; its whole charm, which he felt as no other Russian ever did, he endeavoured to reproduce in his story, "Rome," which remained unfinished.

In Russia, meanwhile, the performances of his play and the conflict of opinions concerning it went on. The subject of it

had already been treated by Osnovyanénko. Pushkin, who himself had once ranked as "Revizor" at Nóvgorod—*i.e.*, an official sent by the Ministry into the provinces to lay bare shortcomings—pointed out to Gógol this comical subject which was simply in the air. The officials of a secluded country town are startled out of their idyllic repose by the news that they are to be put through their paces by an Inspector travelling incognito; a St. Petersburg windbag whom chance brings there just then is taken by the guilty and the innocent for this Inspector, adapts himself admirably to the part, lives freely and merrily at the cost of the inhabitants, and makes off in the nick of time. At a fresh meeting of the "ruling powers" of the little town this mistake is cleared up to the great chagrin of those who have been injured and befooled, and the announcement of the real "Revizór" having just arrived breaks over them like a fresh catastrophe. Even in 1845 Bulgárin, in his "Bee of the North," let his heart bleed at the thought that the whole higher society of St. Petersburg appeared at the performances of the "Revizór," and without an idea what officials were like took it that these were drawn from nature: "No, ladies and gentlemen, there are no such officials."

Gógol's satire differed from those that went before, from Griboêdov's, whose Chatsky at least heralded another, more hopeful, youth, or from von Vízin, with whom models of virtue swarmed, by the total absence of a positive character. The whole crew of officials were a pack of hounds forgetful of duty and thievish ("You steal above your rank"), absolutely arbitrary, knowing only one fear, that of being caught by a superior. So far this satire was by no means "harmless," in the smiling style. Gógol might indeed object that such a state of things was only tolerated through ignorance, that the incorruptible, watchful eye of a sage Government would precisely by the sending of an Inspector put an end to this rascality and strike terror. Nevertheless, his satire threw an unfavourable light on bureaucracy and the system; it afforded ample material for the discontented, for Radicals and grumblers. Gógol himself, the ultra-loyal Conservative from Pushkin's

entourage, had certainly no sort of subversive, critical, or even Liberal impulses. At first he wrote the whole only for his own amusement, and assigned more space in it to "holy laughter" than in the later edition; but he hated the bureaucracy bitterly like Pushkin, and this accounts, not only for the purpose of the whole, but also for many by no means harmless aphorisms—*e.g.*, in the opening scene: "There is no man without sin; that was so arranged by God, and it is no use the Voltairians raging against it." The teacher makes nothing but grimaces, but the inspector at once gets censured: "Why are free-thinking ideas inculcated in the young?" The thoughtless public took the comedy as a farce and looked about with laughter—its *vis comica* was and is to this day unsurpassed. The splenetic, cool Great Russsian was not capable of it; it lay in the temperament of the good-natured but cunning Little Russian. Others laughed purposely; others again cried out at the undermining of authority. The author, to whom his comedy from a mere tickling of the risible muscles had become a great and serious business, protested against all fault-findings six years later (1842) in his one-act piece, "On leaving the Theatre after the Performance of a new Comedy," where he characterised with inspired skill the most varied spectators and their opinion, or want of one. The small people he makes instinctively hit the correcter views; the higher are indifferent or hostile. At last the author opens his mouth in defence of the one honourable personage in his comedy, Laughter, which was nothing mean and in which sparks of deep feeling were to be found: who laughs most often also sheds deep and heartfelt tears. This defence was in itself superfluous; whoever did not purposely shut his eyes must even from the furious final outcry of the deceived Chief of Police have gathered the significance of the supposed farce. The being made a fool of was not enough: "There will yet come a quill-driver, a paper-smearer, and put you in a comedy; that hurts deeply; he will spare neither rank nor repute, and all will gnash their teeth and applaud." (Turning to the public): "Why do you laugh? You are laughing at yourselves. Ah—you! I should like to —— all these paper-

stainers—Ugh ! Quill-drivers, Liberals, accursed brood of the devil. . . . I would pop you all in a mortar and grind you all to flour and give you to the devil to make a lining for his cap." The highly-strained expectations of the morbidly nervous author were least of all satisfied by the first impressions of the acting (for the actors interpreted everything as a farce) and reception by the public, and he fled hastily from Russia "to divert his distress, to thoroughly think over his duties as an author and his future works and come back refreshed and a new man."

He had long since had another subject in hand and had already read aloud to Pushkin the first chapters of his prose novel, "Dead Souls," the first part of which appeared in 1842 ; only he felt himself when abroad more free as regards his country. It is true his heart drew him, the longing for home, but his stay in it only too soon unnerved him. People who in practice prove very unskilful show themselves masters in theory, and so Pushkin had hit on the following : The revision of the lists of peasants took place every ten years and during that time the lord had to pay the poll-tax for the "souls" that had died meanwhile (*i.e.* men, for women and children did not count) ; these dead souls were a burden to him. If a sharper could be found who would take these dead souls off him and pay the poll-tax for them, the lord would be relieved. The trickster in his turn could mortgage at the Board of Guardians the souls which of course he represented as living to some desert place in the Crimea at one hundred roubles apiece and make off with the result. Thus Gógol's Chíchikov travels through Russia to beat up such dead souls for such a transaction. We go with him to a largish provincial capital, from which as a centre he "draws" a whole system of estates. His visits to the various manors, the success or failure of his transaction, which breaks down because suspicious people want first to inquire the price of dead souls in town, the description of the same and its "dear" officials—here the hatred of the bureaucracy breaks through again—form the substance of the "poem." "In what metre is it written then ?" inquires Senkowski mockingly.

"Amid the triumphs of mediocrity and want of talent, pharisaical patriotism, and sweetly colourless bidding for popularity there suddenly appears a genuinely Russian work, as true to life as patriotic, mercilessly tearing the veil from reality, breathing passionate love for the fruitful essence of Russian life, an immeasurably artistic creation in conception and execution, in the characters of the *dramatis personæ* and the details of Russian life, and at the same time deep in its ideas, social and historical." Thus did the somewhat exaggerated criticism of the democratic Westerniser Bêlínsky welcome the work which to the same extent delighted the Slavophiles and made them by the mouth of Aksákov place Gógol beside Homer and Shakespeare and talk of a Russian "Iliad," while others went into raptures even in the case of Chíchikov's coachman Selifán over the depicting of unadulterated Russian life, because forsooth Selifán spoke kindly to his horses and got senselessly drunk with every "decent" man. Only the "watchers of Sion" of official right-thinking complained: "What will foreigners say to it? All the heroes of the story are either knaves or blockheads; there is no body to it, the diction is often common and defective; the author is far below Paul de Kock, is a realist of the fifteenth class." Others consoled themselves with the thought that what Gógol described did not occur at all in Nature, was a caricature of the present, the creation of a frolicsome fancy.

Thus the verdicts contradicted each other even more glaringly than over the "Revizór." What had the author intended? He had now become very loquacious, dreaded misinterpretations, and interpolated comments of his own. "I have made no model of virtue my hero, because it is at last nearly time to give the poor paragon a rest: because the word "virtuous" is used idly; because the "virtuous man" has become a hobby and is ridden by every author and urged on with the knout or whatever else he gets in his hand; because people have already so exhausted the paragon that no shadow of virtue is any more to be seen on him and only bones and skin remain instead of flesh: because people hypocritically summon the paragon, and because folks no longer honour him. No, it was time at length to put the rascal in the shafts as

well." And if one asks who Chíchikov is, morally considered, the answer is at hand, "A rascal." "Why a rascal then? why should one be so hard on others? There are no longer any rascals among us, none but well-disposed peasant people: of those that to public disgrace would turn their cheek to a public smiting one finds at most one or two and even these speak of virtue. It would be more just to call Chíchikov an economist, a seeker of gain: it is the acquiring of gain that is to blame for all." The author was only oppressed by the conviction that all would have received his hero gladly as a most interesting man if the author had not gazed so deep into his soul, if he had only showed him as he appeared outwardly. To be sure, then his image would not be as clear to their eyes, but in return nothing would have disturbed the soul of the reader; people might have gone back quietly to the card-table, the delight of all Russia. The reader just did not want to see human suffering. What was the good? Let him rather forget, show him something beautiful and attractive. "Moreover so-called patriots will find fault with the author, those that in their corners follow their businesses and enrich themselves at the expense of others, but as soon as a book appears with a new and better truth in it creep out of all the corners, like spiders in whose web a fly is entangled, and straightway raise the cry, 'Is it nice to represent anything of the sort?' This sort of patriotism dreads a deeply piercing glance. It likes to glide over everything with a thoughtless eye; it will even laugh heartily at Chíchikov, nay, praise the author: 'There is much that he has observed to the life—must be a jolly fellow!' And it adds self-complacently: 'To be sure there are odd and ridiculous people in the provinces, and great rascals as well,' instead of asking whether it too has not a good share of Chíchikov in it."

True, Gógol envies the author who from the great whirl of daily pictures has chosen some few exceptions, has never once lowered the high key of his lute, or descended from his heights to his poor, insignificant fellows, while he, Gógol, has ventured to call up all that we have every moment before our eyes, which only the indifferent eye does not see, the whole appal-

ling, fearsome slough of pettinesses which twine about our life, the whole flight of cold, supple, every-day characters which swarm across our bitter, wearisome, earthly way, and has ventured with the whole skill of his chisel to place them before the pitiless eyes of all clearly and distinctly. "And long was it decreed for me, by a wondrous power, to walk hand in hand with my strange heroes, to contemplate life in its giant course, to view it through the world's visible laughter and unseen, unknown tears. . . . Empty and abject will the hypocritical contemporary in his harsh judgment call these creations, and assign them a despised corner among the writers who revile mankind, for he does not realise that the glasses which observe the sun are no more wonderful than those that display the movements of invisible infusoria; for his judgment does not recognise how much mental profundity is needed to enlighten a picture taken from humble life and raise it into a pearl of creation: it does not realise that high and enthusiastic laughter is worthy to stand on the same level with high lyrical aspiring, and that a whole gulf separates such laughter from the grimaces of a clown at a fair."

"When I read to Pushkin the first chapter of 'Dead Souls'" —Gógol was an unsurpassable reader aloud, as also a comic genius of the first water—"the expression of Pushkin, who at other times always laughed at my reading (and he loved laughing), gradually became darker and darker, and at last clouded over altogether. When I came to an end he broke out into the words, 'God, what a sad country Russia is!'" Herzen, too, gave utterance to a bitter reproach against Russia as a whole. In reality there are nothing but "dead souls," sunk in the flattest commonplace, without a Divine spark, and the sight of them must be crushing, particularly for the Romanticist. For the Gógol of "The Revizor," and "Dead Souls," and "Petersburg Tales," hates these shallow, vapid ways. He sees the harm which is done on the one hand by this hollowness, indolence, and indifference to evil, on the other by coarse self-sufficiency, boasting, and the rottenness of moral principles; and he seeks to shake their undisturbed supremacy with the weapons of humour. To be sure the

humour of "Dead Souls" was several shades deeper than that of the "Revizor": if in the former jovial, unforced laughter at the topsy-turvy world, the laughter of the Ukrainer made itself felt, here it is simply suppressed, there lies over it a veil of Great Russian caustic irony. Realism, nay Naturalism, celebrates its highest triumph: the most exact observation and the most careful reproduction of the things seen, the abundance of figures, each distinct, lifelike, surely portrayed with but few touches. Only a little something betrays the Romanticist, as in the "Revizor" the dash of the grotesque, where his own description goes to the head of Khlestakóv, so here the part of that Harpagon Plushkin, in whom the harmless "love of acquisition" has grown into a demoniac power, which sucks the whole man dry, and makes him a violation of humanity. But, like the famous English caricaturist, Gógol takes fright at his own figures: the Romanticist in him, hitherto always overmastered and slumbering deep in him, claims his rights. He can no longer content himself with all these distortions of the Divine image, he is so full of the importance of his calling, which Pushkin's circle, with its conception of the poet-prophet, the chosen vessel of Mercy, set before him, that he regards himself as a preacher and teacher of his fellow-men, and that he makes ready to show them directly the way of salvation. This he cannot do with his commonplace, low-comedy heroes. The power of holy laughter suffices him no longer, he will create something positive. The Russian Gil Blas novel, without love adventures to be sure, which was without beginning or end—fresh pictures of squires and other episodes could be added to it at pleasure—furnished only the prelude to quite a different work. In the second part Chíchikov's conversion, in the third his purification, were to be represented; well-defined heroes, virtuous governors-general, brandy contractors, and great landowners were to come on the scene as the providential instruments of this Russian Purgatory and Paradise. Illusions had always played a great part with Gógol; he confused what he had planned and what he had carried out. No wonder, then, that even in the eleven chapters of the first volume, "an

unimportant entry into a great city," we are given glorious prospects of the colossal pictures, the hidden moving-springs of a full-blown novel. "It may be that in the same tale will be heard other chords not yet struck, there will be revealed the boundless wealth of Russian intellect, there will pass over the stage the man endowed with god-like virtues, or the Russian maid such as she is to be found nowhere else in the world, with all the wondrous beauty of her woman's soul, wholly compact of high-hearted endeavour and self-sacrifice; and all the virtuous men of other nations will seem dead in face of them, as a book is dead in face of the living word: it will be seen how deeply imbedded in the nature of the Slavs is what merely slides off the nature of other peoples."

"The time is still far when the storm of enthusiasm will arise from the head crowned with holy terror and lightning, and men will listen in confused trembling to the majestic thunder of other words." Hence came the style, anticipating all this, of "Poem" for the whole.

The Slavophiles were enchanted over these announcements; they consequently magnanimously forgave the poet the one-sidedness of the first volume. When the first intoxication of delight over the work had subsided in the Westerner Bêlínsky, this music of the future made him mistrustful; he wrote: "Much, only too much, is promised as to the continuation, so much that from no quarter can one gather how these promises could be fulfilled, for this reason—that there is as yet nothing of the sort in the world. We are absolutely frightened by the thought that the first part, in which all is comic, might remain a regular tragedy, and the other two, in which the tragic is to come to the fore, turn out comical, at least in the pathetic passages." The brilliant penetration of Bêlínsky was not mistaken; it turned out as he had prophesied. And in other places also he protested against these and similar effusions in "Dead Souls," against its lyrical digressions, as he would against defects or blots in the painting of a great master. At the second and third parts Gogol now went on working up to the end of his life, in 1852. He twice flung the work, when completed, into the fire. We possess to-day only plans

and fragments. Some of it is splendid, the chapters in the style of the first part, the new encounters with Tentetnikóv, &c. The virtuous figures are mere fictions, Rossiáninovs out of the "Výzhigin" of Bulgarin, lay figures, not men. Like Dostoévsky, Gógol continued to owe us the description of the "regeneration." We are fully satisfied with the Chíchikov of the First Part; not so the author, who vainly spent himself in embodying his new ideals.

The tragedy of the man had begun even before that of the artist. The chief religious feature of his nature, the firm belief in Providence which guided every step of him, its Elect, the high estimate of his calling, and not least the trend of the age, whose religious interest had awakened again, resulted together, especially with the Roman isolation of the author, in a turning inwards, an aversion from the world and its doings which must in the end lead to asceticism and reclusedom. This struck people, and was remarkable, particularly in Russian society, to which religion frequently is something quite outward, simply meaning a coating of the bureaucratic whitewash, to which religiousness coincides with Pharisaism and hypocrisy, and religion becomes merely a uniform, put on on certain occasions—with the people it is simply synonymous with superstition. In face of this society, so indifferent to religion, there awoke in Gógol a holy zeal; in the consciousness of his intellectual importance and his ascetic temper, he took upon himself to be a judge of consciences, an adviser and an expert counsellor, acting the father confessor to his friends and acquaintances, urging them to the Christian virtues of humility, resignation, mercy, and gentleness: not to resist authority, to withstand the temptations of an enticing intelligence, to become contrite Christians, and to perfect themselves, when all else must of itself be added unto them. And in order to allow as many as possible to share the blessings and results of his words, instead of the second volume of "Dead Souls," which refused to get any more forward, he published, somewhat prematurely, the "Select Passages from a Correspondence with Friends" (1847). Even to this the Censorship had many objections to make.

The effect of the book was annihilating to Gógol. The man who hitherto, in spite of Gógol's express attempts to prevent him, had simply idolised him, Bêlínsky, wrote to him from Salzbrunn, where he was staying for the good of his lungs, the celebrated letter of renunciation of July 15, 1847. The possession of a copy of this letter or to read it out put one in danger of one's life, and contributed to Dostoévsky's being condemned to death! In this letter he apostrophised his former idol, "Proclaimer of the Knout, Apostle of Ignorance, Aider and Abettor of Obscurantism and of the Fury of Darkness, Panegyrist of Tartar Customs, what are you doing? . . . The great writer who, with his wondrously artistic, deeply lifelike creations has contributed so mightily to Russia's self-knowledge, giving it the possibility to look at itself as in a mirror, comes forward with a book in which, in the name of Christ and of the Church, he teaches the barbarian squires to extract still more from the peasants, the 'unwashed muzzles.' A Voltaire who by his raillery extinguishes the fires of fanaticism is more the son of Christ than all your priests, Bishops, Metropolitans, and Patriarchs of East and West." Bêlínsky was always all passion; his pious wrath and deep sorrow for the picture that lay shattered at his feet may make the violence of this indictment seem explicable. Gógol was sacredly serious about his outbursts, but the arrogant, haughty tone of them and the sting of many of his assertions he softened down in a subsequent "Confession of the Author." If the moralist had already killed the artist in him, the ascetic now wholly took his place. Gógol went a pilgrimage to the Sepulchre of the Saviour, was charitable especially to poor students, scourged himself, and prayed, watched, and fasted until a nervous fever carried off this wholly exhausted ecstatic. As little as the writer knew how to create his incarnated ideals could the man bring about or devise the reconciliation with Life.

Nobody dealt such heavy blows at Romanticism as this disguised Romantic, who, in contradiction to himself, insisted on simplicity and naturalness, and hence deeply despised the Romantic flood of words of such a one as Kúkolnik. Even at the beginning of his career (1832) he had declared to an

acquaintance: "The comic is hidden everywhere, only living in the midst of it we are not conscious of it; but if the artist brings it into his Art, on the stage say, we shall roll about with laughter and only wonder we did not notice it before." To this principle he remained true, the great Realist who with justice prefixed to his comedy the motto "Don't blame the mirror if your mouth is crooked." To hold a mirror up to Russia is just what he did; he did not flatter, he did not caricature. Hence the fury of the one party, Bulgárin and his fellows, who saw that their colourless ware no longer found custom; the indignation of the old Romanticists, such as Polevóy, to whom this naturalness seemed treachery to Art: let it be remembered that for the first time in Russia a comedy and a novel were doing without a love-story. Even to-day and in other countries love is as much part of a play as paint and wigs and of a novel as paper and printer's ink. The old desire of Peter for a sensible piece without love had at last been fulfilled. All the more frantic was the applause of the young and of the Liberals who, by a crass misunderstanding, simply appropriated this arch-Conservative and did not recognise their error until late.

The desire of the critics for a truly national work was gratified, not by Pushkin or Lérmontov, but first by Gógol, although just the loudest shouters in the struggle did not at all acknowledge the work. Free not only from all imitation but even prompting by others, drawn from Russia's innermost, it could say of itself, "Here is Russia, here it savours of Russia." And this realism, masterly both in image and word, for which its opponents at once coined the name of "Natural School," which Bêlínsky readily caught up, a natural tendency in contrast with an unnatural—*i.e.*, fictitious—at a time when Europe as yet had not thought of Realism or Naturalism, became an example to whole generations which derive directly from Gógol and carry on his incomplete work, which lacks not only women, priests, the army, and so on, but even the people. At length Russia had found itself.

The fact that Gógol lost himself again, so that we have to protect his own works against him, did not alter this at all. Thus he even managed to attach a mystic significance to his

"Revizór." This little town with its officials "is our town of the Soul, and lies in each of us. The true Inspector is thus the conscience: Khlestakóv is the false, windy, worldly, corrupt conscience which allows itself to be led by the nose by the passions. By the laughter which is inspired by love of our fellows, not the vain laughter of the idle world, we will drive away the spiritual evildoers." In the same way as we know the theologians of the Middle Ages succeeded in interpreting every story in the Bible in a threefold allegorical sense, in the same way we should defend Chíchikov against Gógol's attack: why, we know his bringing-up, how the "well-regulated" father always taught his little Paul: "Try to please your teachers; do not have to do with schoolfellows unless they are rich; treat nobody, rather let them treat you; above all watch your penny, the truest and only friend." Even the regeneration of a Plúshkin, who at least is capable of one passion, if it is only that of avarice, would seem more credible to us than that of our hero, devoid of any passion, commonplace and shallow, but all the more lifelike.

Gógol is psychologically an exceptionally interesting problem, full of apparent contradictions, and least known by those who thought they knew him best. He has had many sincere friends and admirers, but to none did he ever grant full insight into his complicated spiritual lite; he concealed from them even the details of his scourgings. His death came unexpectedly, tore him away from apparently his freshest spell of creation. The dread of death seems, owing to a loss that touched him very closely (that of Khomyakóv's wife), to have given his shattered constitution the last blow, but even in his latest days we have nothing but riddles before us. Why, for instance, did he burn in that disastrous night (of February 11th) the second volume of "Dead Souls"? He maintained that he did so by an error; he meant only to burn part of it and burnt the whole, through the Evil One having played him a trick. He consoled himself by his being able to replace the loss. But that might be only misleading and repelling of troublesome inquirers. Quite other motives have been ascribed to him; people even talked of a deliberate sacrifice

of his dearest treasure, somewhat as Abraham offered Isaac to the Lord. In any case, the decision seems to have come suddenly. Only that idea must be rejected which folks most often accept, that he did it out of dissatisfaction with his work. On the contrary, we know from his own telling what wide prospects spread before him in respect of this very work, even though in many ways it was one of necessity. He had long counted on it as a compensation for the failure of the "Correspondence."

Pushkin had brought Russian poetry, as regards diction and matter, down from its stilts, had shown what treasures can be acquired in the simple life around us, among peasants, and on the monotonous broad plain, and had also created incarnate ideals, in his "Tánya," for instance. Gógol effected the same for the novel, only that his ideals were hardly successful ; he, too, refrained from History, from exceptional complications and inflated artists, and, avoiding all flat didactics, showed what simple, everyday life offers. Pushkin cleared his way for himself. His critics, who stuck out about the smallest externals—the use of a case, and so on—had nothing to say of him, could at most admire or calumniate him. Gógol's lot was cast in a more advanced period ; those were by then forthcoming who were able to point out the meaning of his works to the simple reader. Since then creation and criticism go hand in hand, whether they fight against or support each other.

CHAPTER IX

ROMANTIC CRITICISM—BÊLÍNSKY

Previous condition of criticism—Its appearance since 1820—the Romanticist critics, Venevítinov, Bestúzhev, Vyázemsky, Polevóy, Nadêzhdin—The *début* of Bêlínsky—His æsthetic and philosophical, his journalistic criticism—His influence—Reaction grows stronger—Persecutions of ideas and men—The Petrashévtsy.

CRITICISM anticipated the development of elegant literature. True it was a long while before one that was æsthetically and philosophically trained made its appearance at all; we do not meet with it till after 1820. The old Russian "Parnassus," with its strictly recognised authorities, its firmly marked out provinces, and the inviolable principles of Laharpe and Batteux, brooked, like every autocracy, no sort of criticism, only laudatory recognition. Karamzín had assigned the former a space in his *Moscow Journal*, but afterwards banished it from his *European Messenger* (*Vêstnik*) in order not to scare away the few literary men. Even of the writers of the eighteenth century there was no sort of systematic appreciation, except an essay of Karamzín's on Bogdanóvich. Prince Shálikov, for instance, the editor of the *Lady's Journal* of fashions, &c., complained that overstrained criticism might dishearten our budding geniuses; they would fall and wither like spring flowers before a storm! "Critical" disputes there were before 1820, not about literature, but language, between the followers of Shishkóv and Karamzín. In 1815 one single performance of consequence had been produced, a criticism

of Kheráskov's "Rossiad," by the arch-classicist, sworn to Eschenburg's project of a theory and literature of the humaner sciences — the Moscow professor Merzlakóv. Instead of criticism there were parodies of Odes, including Derzhávin's, by Márin and others, humorous poems, Bátyushkov's against the Shishkóvites, their kingdoms of moths and mice, their vendetta against all who sharpened epigrams against them, who write as they speak, who are read by ladies, or couplets and epigrams which were concocted at the Moscow evenings of Prince Vyázemsky and others.

The Romanticists were above all the first to effect a change in the previous estimate of all literary values; they came to the decision that there was as yet no Russian Literature. Only one party proclaimed this more harshly, the others more delicately; but in doing so they at times did not spare Romanticism either, protested against the imposition of a German or English yoke instead of a French, and raised a cry for a national Literature. The most philosophically trained among them was the Moscow "Apprentice to the Archives," Venevítinov. His arguments are of the most general kind, and culminate in the proposition, "Self-knowledge is the aim and crown of man, the enlightenment that grows on native soil." Russia got everything from abroad, an external form of culture raised without any foundation, a seeming edifice of Literature without the exertion of her own inward powers. The inactivity of her thought is the cause of her weakness; the false rules of the French they have now replaced by the want of any rules, hence the general mania for metre, a sign of spiritual frivolity. He called, lastly, for more reflection than production, a philosophical training which was to be obtained at the cost of the latter, even ir people produced nothing for decades. Others proposed less radical measures, like the Decembrist and subsequent mystic Küchelbeker, who attacked the Romantists for their imitation of imitation, for their melancholy: "Read a single one of our elegies, and you know them all." The Decembrist and romancer Bestúzhev, who as the editor of a very popular "Almanac" did not want to quarrel with any one, and spoke flatteringly of all, neverthe-

less asked in the same strain: "When shall we at last find our own path? When shall we write Russian direct? God alone knows."

Prince Vyázemsky at times employed himself as a critic, one of the many Russian great noblemen who, unlike the German, were so fond of practising literature. He attained the age of a very Methuselah; his youth belongs to the period of unrestricted Classicism—in 1808 he was already printing verses—and he remained active in a literary way till his death in 1878. From the French he inherited his love for smooth, witty expression, and coined sarcastic remarks which passed all round Russia. Although he defended Pushkin and Romanticism, he remained at bottom a Classicist. A keen, clear intellect of the most comprehensive cultivation, he was averse to all prejudice and exaggeration, whereas, as a rule, the Russians "indulge to excess in settled ideas, so that they are never free from a sort of periodical *delirium tremens*, and when they have slept their fill they often cannot remember their own attack"; he declared at last even against the verdict of the jury. He gave way to no illusions. When expounding Pushkin's works he said in the well-known Preface to the "Fountain of Baghchi-Sarai" in 1824: "Hitherto a small number of good writers has just managed to give some sort of shape to our language; we confess with humility, but also with hope, that there is indeed a Russian language, but no literature, no worthy expression of a powerful and manly people. We have as yet no Russian "mode" in Literature; perhaps we shall never have it, because it does not exist." This scepticism is characteristic of the cool intellect, passionless and therefore by no means qualified for a critic; it is more drawn towards historical contemplation. Thus we owe him the first correct estimate of Derzhávin and Dmítriev, and the first solid historical study, that on Von Vízin in 1849. Vyázemsky cultivated, in addition, the art of poetry for decades, and at times verged on prose in descriptive poems, such as "The First Snow" (1817), especially in the deeply-felt elegy on Pushkin's death. "The Young Epicurean" made haste to live and to feel, just like Bátyushkov, but he also struck political chords, urged

Zhukóvsky (! !) into the "civil" career, apostrophised "Indignation," and declared: "Freedom! With burning enthusiasm I made bold, the first in Russian poetry, to call on thee and awaked the silence," and so on. To be sure, the Asmodeus of the Arzamás confessed in his old age: "In my youth I let myself be ruled by the Liberal ideas of the day, in my manhood by considerations of the public service, and lastly by the cares and vexations of age"; thus his Radicalism faded soon and thoroughly. He even wholly loses himself in by-paths, as in the famous "Holy Russia," 1850, which delighted Zhukóvsky, in which he extolled the monarchic and religious genius, *i.e.*, Nicholas, after the suppression of the Hungarians, "he who saved Russia from Revolutions," also in his patriotic soldier-songs during the Crimean War. He is such a characteristic phenomenon that it is still worth while to linger a moment over him.

This scion of Rurik and pupil of the St. Petersburg Jesuit College, then the best place of education in Russia, where the sons of the great nobles met, passed through the same transition from Liberalism to crass High Toryism as Pushkin, only that no poetical endowment excuses him for it. He at first took delight in opposition, railed in his letters at persons and conditions—the post in those days was not intended for the forwarding of letters but the reading of them, and the Chief of Police's reproof of the postmaster in the "Revizor" for unjustifiable opening of letters sounds quite simple-minded—and clenched his fist in his pocket over the hideously unjust decision against the Decembrists, threatening to go into exile. But soon this mild Radical intoxication, in the course of which he, together with others, had petitioned Alexander I. for the liberation of the peasants, passed off. Satirical poems, before he changed his mount, made him known, as also Radical ones like Pushkin's, though written with less vehemence. There was also a comparison between St. Petersburg and Moscow, humorous descriptions of the Russian Carnival, and so on, with outbursts against foreigners. Otherwise this Frenchman was a regular Russ of the eighteenth-century pattern, convinced of the omnipotence of the State, which to him was identified

with Russia, hence looking down on other Slavs with contempt and Poland with lofty pity. There was in his blood the "Pamphletist," and side by side with it unquestioning admiration for Karamzín, the innovator in words and Conservative in politics, and lastly the literary man, but one of a very peculiar order; for Turgénev and Tolstoy he did not know how to appreciate at all. The old veteran of Borodinó protested most strongly against the killing off of the Russian Generals by Tolstoy, for he was as narrowly Conservative and strictly autocratic in his historical views as in matters of politics and taste. Bêlínsky and the men of the forties were an abomination to him; a living anachronism, overgrown with moss and mildew, he looked out on the present and complained that he was deliberately forgotten, which was a matter of course, as he had never written anything really great. He was advantageously raised above the surroundings of the fifties and the years that followed by aristocratic sentiment, tact, and contempt for the petty policy of pin-pricks and the rage for uniformity—a rage which is yet to rise higher, against the presumption of poplars and limes growing instead of Russian birches and pines. Some obligation was laid on him by his Voltairianism. In other respects he got no farther than epigrams and whole volumes of detached jottings.

His comprehension of Romanticism, although he translated B. Constant's novel, and was enthusiastic about Byron, may have been very problematical, but he was allured by the prospect of a fight; and so he descended into the journalistic arena, if only to disturb the St. Petersburg triumvirate, Bulgárin, Gréch, and Voéykov, whose part was soon to be taken by Senkowski, in their monopoly, and thus it came about that the critic Vyázemsky for some time went hand in hand with Nicholas Polevóy, although the contrasts could not conceivably have been sharper. Polevóy was a plebeian and self-taught, without tact or sense of form, one-sided and violent. He was the first Russian journalist by vocation, though not a journalist to European notions, for politics remained wholly tabooed—the Government would not suffer even laudatory mention of its doings; whatever of Science or Litera-

ture he had read or learned of the Germans or French, Schlegel and Niebuhr, Cousin and Guizot, he served it up hot to the public, in simple and intelligible form; attacked remorselessly all that stood in his way or was antiquated; without a trace of respect mocked at the "Authorities"; championed with fiery zeal modern Romanticism and the Pushkin of the twenties; in his *Moscow Telegraph* (1825–1834), which numbered two thousand subscribers, while others had to content themselves with a hundred or a hundred and fifty, he put through and celebrated the victory of Romanticism. He raised his hand against everything and wrote, in opposition to Karamzín's "History of the Russian State," a "History of the Russian People," which, however, only came down to the middle of the sixteenth century; in this, after the example of German historians—his work is dedicated to Niebuhr—he eliminated morality and didacticism as well as fable and prejudice or accident from his description, and insisted on historical necessity, organic coherence, and making men and times live again from all points of view; thus he fell out with the admirers of Karamzín. Far more recklessly did he deal with other contemporary "great men"—the two Dmítrievs, Zhukóvsky, to whom he denied the name of Romanticist, and others. On the other hand, he honoured foreign Romanticism and Pushkin up to 1830, though he fought against it in Russia because of its clumsiness and dependence; he no longer understood Pushkin after 1830, when he seemed to him to have become "monotonous," and to have lost the charm of novelty. Even far less did he find himself at ease with Gógol's realism; the romantic *raconteur* he had welcomed, but to the inveterate Romanticist the realism of the "Revizor," which Prince Vyázemsky, for instance, knew how to value exceptionally accurately, and that of "Dead Souls," was an abomination. He attacked the latter as a libel on Russia, ridiculed the opinion of the author as to the moral value of his work, placed him below Dickens, whom he also hated, in spite of certain bright pages in his stories, and on a level with Paul de Kock. He had already lived beyond his time and could no longer keep pace with the age. The arbitrary close of his

career by the sudden prohibition of the *Telegraph* made this feeling of being behind the times weigh on him all the more.

His enemies triumphed. The significance of the *Telegraph* as a revival of extinct Russian journalism, as a popularising of modern Western knowledge, and a critical revision of all unfounded estimates of Russian Classicists and Romanticists, a plea for "independence," although Polevóy did not succeed very well in defining that term, was now a thing of the past, and its editor, bereft of influence, had for twelve years longer to slave for journeyman's pay, and that for his former opponents. Against the Romantic critic who had unmercifully ridiculed the Russian "Theocritovs, Anacreonovs, Hamletovs, Demischillerovs, Obezianins (*i.e.*, Apes), Orientalins, Epithetins," and so forth, to whom the fair and highly promising beginnings of Russian Romanticism, *i.e.*, Pushkin, had ended in "wearisome nothingness," who had only wished to joke and play with Russian literary men "because one cannot be seriously angry with children," his opponents, including, alas! Pushkin, directed not only epigrams and mockeries of his old status and calling—"He should buy brandy of him who wishes to come off well with him"—and denunciations, but even set younger assailants in motion. Especially keen against him and the whole Romantic movement, for the moral harm it had caused as a creation of the Revolution, of the Byron of "Cain," was Nadêzhdin, afterwards Professor at Moscow, who, in spite of these prejudiced exaggerations in literary as in historical questions, often displayed a sound judgment and one in advance of the age. His presentiment that Holy Russia, called to the leading part in the new drama of nations, would create for itself a poetry of its own which, enriched by the treasures of Classicism and Romanticism, would grow strong enough for vigorous independence of action was, indeed, to be realised. For the moment he saw in the Russian literary wilderness only stray alien phenomena, translations and imitations, servile labour of the Russians for their foreign master, rapid withering of all efforts, a mad order of things, a "yellow house," *i.e.*, asylum of the devotees of Romanticism.

Far more serious was the message of the Moscow disciple of Schelling, Kirêevsky; to be sure, it did not only regard elegant literature, but went deeper, to the whole system which hung together with it, the dependence of Russian advanced thought in general. "To the admirer and disciple of the West our nationality has hitherto been an uncultured, rough, and stagnant one like the Chinese; the elements of our development we must draw from Europe, as we possess none of our own. Let us only go sedulously to the school of Europe; it teaches us nothing but good: other people's thoughts may then awaken our own. Let us learn at present above all respect for reality: we expect nowadays of literature comprehension of the present; even philosophy and religion draw nearer to life, become practical and positive; poetry must try to achieve the same." Of course, he sees the want of this, particularly in the Russians, in the unnatural predominance of all possible foreigners, from which only a good genius can deliver them. For the carrying out of his ideas Kirêevsky destined a new magazine, the *European*, the first number of which opened, in 1832, with his essay, "The Nineteenth Century." He had the best collaborators—Vyázemsky, Zhukóvsky, and others. But Count Benkendorf, chief of the "Third Section," considered that the essay, although ostensibly only dealing with literature, dealt in higher politics, and meant by enlightenment "freedom," by mental activity "revolution," and by an artificially determined mean "Constitution": the author, therefore, was not "right-thinking." The magazine was at once forbidden, the Censor, Aksákov, who had allowed it to pass, deprived of his office, and Kirêevsky deported from Moscow: Zhukóvsky's mediation kept him from worse.

The real creator of Russian literary and journalistic criticism, who in the impossibility of any other critical pronouncement possesses an exceptional importance paralleled nowhere else, is not to be sought for among professors or aristocratic dilettanti. A plebeian driven away from the University, almost self-taught, knowing no German for instance, a victim of consumption, who, struggling and starving under the most

unfavourable conditions, secured for himself the most modest existence, and who, when he had escaped want, was handed over to the talons of the "Third Section," from which only premature death released him, did ever so much more for the mental revival of Russia than all the Ministers and Committees and titled and bestarred gentry together. We mean the "Russian Lessing"; the bad practice of such labels was taken over by the nineteenth century from the eighteenth. How far Bêlínsky stands below Lessing in knowledge, critical spirit, and philosophical capacity and training, how high he overtops him by the living effect of his word! While his name, even at the beginning of Alexander II.'s reign, might not be mentioned publicly, his essays formed the whole mental capital of the time; especially in the provinces, the young men were mad about him. Decades later Volýnsky, for having sought somewhat to shake his authority, had to pay by almost unanimous ostracism (1894). In order to do justice to him, let us first recall the conditions and contrasts of the literature of the thirties in St. Petersburg and Moscow.

In the former, where the licensed pronouncer on all literary phenomena, the Chief of the Gendarmes, Count Benkendorf, without principles, but in return of the greatest conceivable brusqueness, issued the necessary directions to the Minister of Education, Count Uvárov, and guided the chief of the Censorship, there existed only a literature wholly cut off from life and reality. It was divided into two camps—the aristocratic, which had the entry to the drawing-rooms, *e.g.*, that of Karamzin's widow, the Pushkins, Sologúbs, &c., and was ashamed of the literary men and disowned them, Prince Odoévsky alone excepted, and the plebeian, the journeymen of literature, the translators, &c., who lived only for it and thought of nothing but it, to whom France, for instance, in spite of the literary fashion and its political life, was absolutely indifferent, who looked down contemptuously on the crowd and its interests, unquestioningly respected authorities, placed poets, artists, and learned men on an exceptionally high pedestal, and only recognised Art for Art's sake. For Kúkolnik, for instance, and for Polevóy after his change,

Pushkin had let himself down much too far; they called for exclusive handling of heroic and brilliant figures and incidents, despised reality and the present, and flung phrases about them as to the sacredness of Art; Polevóy, before his change, at Moscow, seemed to them so dangerous that Uvárov declared that under his pen even the Paternoster would come out revolutionary. Into this airless and lightless atmosphere, where everything kow-towed to Uvárov's dogma of the Russian Trinity, Orthodoxy, Autocracy, *i.e*, Serfdom and a State language, only from Moscow, and notably from its University, came there a breath of life.

At that University many things had changed. The times before the "Burning," when there was antagonism between the learned but pedantic German professors, apathetic towards everything Russian, and the Russian, servile, coarse, and ignorant, alumni of the clergy-schools, were gone for ever. Young and able men, especially the physicist Pávlov, who himself, as the Chair of Philosophy must remain unoccupied, lectured on Oken and Schelling; Nadêzhdin, also a disciple of Schelling, Pogódin the historian, Shevyryóv the literary historian, philologists also, and later the idol of the young men, the mild and humane Professor of History, Liberal and faithful to his convictions, Granóvsky, gathered full audiences, and found in their Warden, Count Stróganov, after those that preceded him had troubled themselves only about buttons, close-cropped hair, and the morality of the students, or demanded, in the interests of order, that in case of a professor falling ill the one next to him in rank should lecture for him, a defender even before the Emperor's self.

Far more important was the influence of the students on each other. They came from all parts of Russia, distinctions of birth were not regarded, and they divided off into groups, not by provinces or wealth, but according to mental interests. Thus there grew up round Stankévich, a pupil of Pávlov and Nadêzhdin, and first a Schellingite, then a Kantian, and finally a Hegelian, a philosophical circle from which proceeded Bêlínsky, Bakúnin, whose very name was later to make every German policeman's soul shudder, and Katkóv. Stankévich is

one of those Russians who, without having published anything themselves, are far more important to the annals of literature and interesting than many voluminous writers. He died young, a most tender, sensitively organised nature, a mind trained in strict logic, well versed in "systems," prescribing Hegel not merely externally; he inspired the enthusiastic admiration of the German philosophers and literature which decided Bêlínsky's early career. The latter, who made a living by translating Paul de Kock and giving lessons, had been excluded from the University on the ground of his play "Dmítri Kalínin," in which, after the fashion of "The Robbers," the sharpest protest against serfdom with reproaches against God and all due deference to the wise and just Government, which yet did not save the author, were uttered. The passion which breathed from this unsuccessful play Bêlínsky kept throughout life ("The madness and pride to starve and to die will never be wanting to me") for his criticisms, with which he soon made his *début* in Nadêzhdin's magazine, in the Moscow *Telescope*, and in the *Mólva* (*Report*). His "Literary Dreamings" aroused attention, though at bottom they offered nothing new, repeating what criticism and notably Nadêzhdin had dwelt on—that Russia had no literature; but this was uttered with pathos and enthusiasm, though with relentless frankness. These criticisms bore witness to a sure æsthetic sense, as in condemning as a mere maker of phrases the lyric poet Benedíktov, who delighted the whole world. To be sure, Bêlínsky and Bakúnin soon ran away with a quite one-sided conception of Hegel's philosophy: they took the proposition of the compatibility of everything actual with Reason literally. Bêlínsky learned from it the necessity of reconciling oneself to any (instead of any reasonable) reality, the illegality of all protest, the exclusive beatification of Conservatism, the remoteness from the present and its cares of Art, an incarnation of the absolute; he cursed its negative tendency, Satire and Comedy, rejected the patriotic when adopted by a conquered people, as in the case of Mickiewicz; vociferated against French art because of its social character and because of the propaganda

of subversive and emancipating ideas, as with Georges Sand; was enthusiastic only for unconsciously creative objective Art, that of Homer, Shakespeare, and Goethe; put Schiller down in the scale, and left Heine not a sound lock.

In this onesidedness, for which Hegel was not in the least to blame, Bêlínsky was not to persist for long. The Moscow magazines on which he worked all ceased to exist and he gladly answered to a call to St. Petersburg, where he ended by taking over the critical portion of the "Annals of the Fatherland," which was meant to break the monopoly of Bulgárin, Gréch, and Senkowski. In any case it was easier among a circle of sympathisers at Moscow to spin around one a web of deductions and constructions and refuse to open one's eyes to the world than in the sobering St. Petersburg atmosphere to shut out reality and its very plain speech. Slowly there became evident Bêlínsky's total defection from what he did not understand—"Yegór Theódorovich Gégel" (Hegel) "and his philosophical nightcap"—and his transition to the French modern practice of Art as a mighty social lever and to the worship of Schiller and Heine. And soon the passionate, excited, heaven-storming critic falls into another extreme: Art becomes a mere excuse to him and literary work is subjected, not to an æsthetic but a purely journalistic inquiry as to what may be deduced from it for Society, Progress, and Humanity, how far it awakes these feelings in the reader, educates him socially, and inculcates humane thoughts as to woman, slavery, &c. To be sure, he is forced by the thought of the Argus eyes of the gendarmes into as much self-restraint as possible, into making a pretext of æsthetic interests; but Bêlínsky lets the mask drop at times, and simply confesses how tedious it would be not to be allowed to speak of anything but Art.

Such was the transformation of Bêlínsky; he served the new Truth even more passionately than the old, and now attained in the second period of his activity, 1841–8, far higher results. Now for the first time he spoke as pleased the hearts of all the young. France, of which but lately a literary man had declared "Let it fall right through the earth;

what does that concern me?" became in the forties the one country in which in thought the Petersburger spent all his time, whereas at home he went about his business purely mechanically. Having such a conception of Art, Bêlínsky was bound to place the realistic in the foreground. As Polevóy once did for Pushkin, so he now defends, explains, and admires Gógol, the "Revizor," and the "Dead Souls"; so, too, he now takes under his protection every new display of talent in which he scents a modern touch, such as the "Poor Folk" of Dostoévsky and the first attempts of a Goncharóv, Herzen, Grigoróvich, &c. It was entirely under his blessing that the whole literature which followed grew up; it felt his impelling power and always gratefully acknowledged it and extolled him as its greatest teacher. He urged on Koltsóv, brought Lérmontov nearer to the reader, and above all expounded the older literature. For he did not content himself with discussing the current writers—especially authoritative were his reviews of the year, which he took up again after Marlínsky-Bestúzhev—but reached back to Pushkin and Griboêdov, Zhukóvsky and Bátyushkov, and still farther.

For him as for his teacher, Nadêzhdin, the history of Russia began with Peter the Great; old literature did not interest him save as a curiosity in a museum, while to that in dialect, *e.g.*, Little Russian, he stood opposed as to a splitting-up of strength; the problem attracted him how in Russian, a purely imitative, hence hothouse and exotic, Literature the approach to reality and life was slowly brought about, how it grew more truthful. Yet he did not neglect the æsthetic side, lingering especially over Pushkin, on whom he really supplied a consecutive commentary, expounding and demonstrating the significance and beauty of every single work, nay, poem. His judgments have since remained authoritative; they are mostly correct, though not complete. What is especially pertinent is his rejection of what is artificial and far-fetched, of all straining after effect and bombast. Thus he was inexorable towards Marlínsky, Polevóy, Kúkolnik, and Benedíktov, and destroyed for ever their hollow reputations. That he made for himself bitter enemies, who did not spare him and whom he did not

leave unanswered, is a matter of course. Even when he did not mention names everybody recognised in his articles (P. Buldogov's) in the Pedant, the knight of the yellow gauntlets, Shevyryóv the Professor of Literature, and in the "literary cynic" the other editor of the Slavophile *Moskvityánin*, Professor Pogódin, whose peddling antiquities bring him the reputation of a scholar, while his living in a cask gets him houses and villages.

After his entire renouncement of his youthful idealism, after having taken as his motto "Art for Life's sake," as against his former maxim of "Art for Art's sake," the enthusiastic fighter was led away in the heat of the struggle into displays of prejudice, nay injustices. Thus he shattered his idol Gogol when he learned his falling away from "Life." To be objective, to do justice to any opponent, to distinguish true and false in him, becomes impossible to him; thus he was the most prejudiced, but at the same time most passionate, opponent of the Slavophiles, and even protested when his Moscow friends did not at once break off personal relations with their opponents. This perversity also decidedly influenced his final estimate of Pushkin and Lérmontov, which then remained authoritative for generations, not without injury to Russian criticism, which learned to neglect the æsthetic and idealistic factor. But lately he wanted to eliminate from poetry the subjective, the temporary, and only wished that it should aim at a harmonious reconciling of all contradictions. Now he misses in Pushkin the holy indignation, the resentment, which so attracts him in Lérmontov, the connection with the present. Pushkin is exclusively an artist, serves Art for Art's sake, and can thus no longer suffice us, hence our cooling towards him. In the more important and greater portion of his production he belongs wholly to his age, which to us is already the past; a new Pushkin, even though he possessed even greater talents, would be able to achieve no more successes. Poetic mirroring of life without comment constitutes his art; his Muse is indeed human through and through, and suffers deeply under the discords and contradictions of life; but she resignedly makes up

her mind to them, she recognises, as it were, the justification of them, and does not bear within herself the ideal of another and better reality. And even more unjust and one-sided does Bêlínsky become in details—*e.g.*, in passing judgment on "Onêgin," particularly Tatiana. One fancies oneself listening to one of the later "accusing critics"—so Bêlínsky christened this prejudiced tendency—when one reads his act of indictment against this most glorious creation of Pushkin's. To him she is a motionless Egyptian mummy; her spirit sleeps, her inner life is only filled with love-longing, her days are not divided between work and leisure, the alternation of which alone holds the moral forces in equilibrium. As a maiden she is only a moral embryo, and reminds us involuntarily of those "ideal" damsels who are so apt to be commonplace and a little laughable. As a woman she has not the courage to yield to the dictates of her heart, kept down by propriety, fearing the judgment of that great world which, after all, she only despises, and thus she stands below the women who reject that compulsion and follow their nature. Thus Bêlínsky with Pushkin as with Lérmontov places the chronological factor, the psychological moment, too much in the background, does not ask whether both might not be deeper, more comprehensive, and lasting embodiments of the Russian national spirit, judges them too hastily and partially from the standpoint of progressive and Westernising propaganda, and thus sets the example for all later and perhaps more prejudiced, nay fantastic, condemnation of the kind.

Thus this exceptionally impulsive, passionate, and fanatical adherent of what he recognised as truth on both occasions shot beyond the mark. We must indeed not forget that after 1840 he was not at all inclined to play the objective and æsthetic referee; that, on the contrary, he wished to mould his critical part of the magazine into a kind of social and political tribunal under the eyes of the "Third Section"; and that he was infinitely more concerned with the emancipation of women and the working classes, the English Constitution, and the institutions of the United States than any literary or æsthetic questions. Hence the numerous contradictions in him. He demanded ideas

in the artist; *e.g.*, that as in Gógol the moralising should gradually increase at the expense of the act of creation, whereas he had but just extolled Gógol for bringing nothing exotic into Russian reality, but simply making it objective, thus lightening its darkness. Again he contemptuously excluded the "pure" artists and dilettanti from contemporary literature. Nay, he did not even trouble about the fact that his almost purely utilitarian new principle was at variance with his metaphysical older definitions of art and the beautiful, nor about the question how far the two should wholly cover each other—whether beauty consists only in the correspondence of idea and form and Art in the reproduction of the beautiful, and whether by the new principle Art was not turned away from its proper task. These points he now touched on no longer, but persisted in the new tendency, nay, raised it even more into an exclusive apotheosis of the "Natural" school when he passed from *Memoirs of the Fatherland* ("Otéchestvennyia Zapíski") to his *Contemporary*, once Pushkin's and Pletnyóv's, now Nekrásov's and Panáev's. His substitute in the "Memoirs," the youthful V. Maíkov, set up a new definition of Art, its displaying the "affecting" (sympathetic) side of everything, while the "interesting" constituted the domain of Science; but his early death in 1847 interrupted the working out of that idea.

Thus triumphed the purposeful didactic tendency in criticism. Even in 1842 Bêlínsky had been able to exclaim: "The spirit of our age is such that even the greatest creative power can astonish us only momentarily if it confines itself to 'a bird's singing,' *i.e.*, does not come down to us and our interests, but abides in its own world of fancy and poetry. The works of a power of that kind, however gigantic they may be, have no place in life and will evoke no enthusiasm or sympathy either in contemporaries or posterity; with natural talent alone one cannot accomplish much, a matter must touch the reason. . . . Creative freedom can easily be brought into harmony with the service of the contemporary spirit. Therefore one need not force oneself to write on fixed subjects nor do violence to one's

fancy ; therefore it is only necessary to be a citizen, the child of one's society and time, make its interests one's own, and let one's own aims flow with the current of the age ; in addition you want only sympathy, love and a sound, practical sense of truth which does not separate conviction from act, work from life." And in good sooth after 1840 a Radical and progressive gust passed over Russia. It was noticed even in the barracks, where the terrible strictness and the triumphs of the art of manœuvring relaxed ; it was noticed in aristocratic and official saloons, where at grand dinners "Nihilism" was actually engendered ; it was noticed in middle-class circles of officials and University men, where in particular French socialistic literature found rapid entrée. People began to form debating and reading clubs, and soon St. Petersburg, the progressive, put itself at the head of the movement. Moscow hung back, lazy and inert, in true Slav fashion.

All this development was suddenly cut short in 1848, and for seven whole years was quite at a standstill. Bêlínsky died, and with him died down the outcries and warnings of journalistic criticism. The "Author of the Studies on Pushkin," so his tabooed name was distorted, was appealed to more and more seldom ; his teachings were forgotten—though not by the young or in the provinces, where the rising teachers knew his letter to Gógol by heart and owed him their mental life. Criticism was non-existent, or opportunism only ; the return to æstheticism, and the principle of Art for Art's sake, the exclusion of psychology and the spirit of the day, unconditional instead of critical admiration of Pushkin, endless bibliographical and biographical researches and controversies, and dry, strictly technical, original investigations filled out the scientific portion of the *Contemporary*, of *Memoirs of the Fatherland*, and Senkowski's *Reader's Library*. Druzhínin and Annenkov, very respectable, cultivated, æsthetically discerning, and even gifted critics, who wanted only the feeling for the demands of the age, were the leading speakers, and rejoiced in the withdrawal of "purposes" and—men of talent. These were no longer spurred on by any fiery work from Bêlínsky ; the more prominent

vanished or became wholly silent. Even before 1848 the great swarm of the new "Gógols" had come on the scene, Dostoévsky, Herzen, Goncharóv, Grigoróvich, Druzhínin, with his "Polínka Sachs," a novel of St. Petersburg official life which had exceptional success; the tame, honest, humane man, averse to all tyranny, brings up his doll-like choice, who accordingly, though she had banged the house-door behind her, comes back penitently, at least in thought; the calm inclination triumphs over romantic ebullitions, but Druzhínin soon gave up elegant literature after this first realistic success. After 1848 they were all violently torn away from literature, pined in disciplinary companies like Dostoévsky and Pleshchéev, or were banished like Saltykóv to the provinces; emigrated like Herzen, of whose not a line could be printed, even under a pseudonym, or remained under police supervision, at first secret and afterwards avowed, like all the Moscow Slavophiles; or imposed voluntary silence upon themselves and turned their attention elsewhere. The place of social novels or novelettes was now taken by endless monster novels that dragged out for years—those of a Zótov, a Nekrásov, in conjunction with Madame Panáev, "Stanítskaya" (Stanítsa"—a Cossack township), in imitation of Eugene Sue. Then came the novels of the *beau monde*—those of Vonlarlársky, who in two years concocted any amount of volumes, and Eugenia Tur, Countess Sallias de Tournemir, who after 1856 gave up writing novels and later on won for herself a fresh reputation as a writer for children; Countess Rostópchin, once famous as a poetess in the thirties and forties, and welcomed even by Bêlínsky, now a purveyoress of novels, and soon held up to ridicule by Chernyshévsky and Dobrolúbov. The laughter of a Gógol, so dangerous, the sympathy with the wretched and with serfs of a Dostoévsky and Grigoróvich, the sketches of "superfluous" beings by a Goncharóv and a Druzhínin—all was forgotten in favour of fresh Marlinskiads, romantic, grasping at sentiment, and the endless twining and untwining of knots in fairy stories for grown-up children. The object of the Censorship was attained: the "exaggerated" panegyrics of Gógol, his realistic school seemed about to come to an end.

As it fared with criticism and *belles lettres*, so it did with every other kind of mental and intellectual activity, only that the pace of the hunting down of every uncensured human idea increased rapidly. Even the unprincipled Uvárov, the Minister of Education on the drill-sergeant pattern, and the more moderate Moscow Warden, Stróganov, laid down their posts in order not to play the part of executioner to the Universities. The proposal was mooted to do away with the Universities and replace them by Technical Schools. In two years, for reasons of all kinds, the number of students sank by a fourth ; the new Minister of Education thought he had done his duty when he merely conveyed the directions of the Third Section to the "Wardens."[1] The Chairs of Philosophy were abolished. Thus Katkóv, hitherto Professor of Philosophy, was forced out of a learned into a journalistic career, in the shape of the editorship of the *Moscow News*, where he was to become a sort of ruling spirit of Russian reaction. Theologians had to supply the lectures on Logic and Psychology, in order to protect the innocent Russians against possible "slips" of these "tottery" branches of knowledge (the Minister's words). Not less sharply were the motions of History watched. The deeply learned (and tedious) "Lectures" (given by the Moscow Historical Society) were suspended because the givers had ventured to print the work of the Englishman Fletcher on old Russia, dated 1590. Of Aksákov's historical study on the life of the ancient Slavs and Russians the Minister thus adversely reported: "It takes for granted that old Russia had democratic principles; this we can on no account allow, seeing that we must protect ourselves to the best of our power against these tendencies which are spreading in foreign States. Besides, the view is false ; ancient Russia knew no democratic principle, and if we find anything of the sort at Nóvgorod or Pskov, it is in consequence of their commercial relations with Germany." Less absurd proved the decision about the same work of the Secret Committee, *i.e.*, Buturlín's (only the cholera could save Russia in 1849 from this Terrorist of

[1] German *Kurator*, Russian *Popechitel—i.e.*, "Guardian." An official exterior to the University, charged with its regulation.

Reaction). The Committee admitted the possibility of democratic principles in ancient Russia, but the bitter consequence thereof and chastisement for it was the invasion of the Tartars; and it was the duty of the historian in the same way to set forth the transformation of these principles into aristocratic, as the one foundation of the prosperity and peace of Russia. As he had omitted to do so his picture was incomplete, and, therefore, the study might on no account be printed. Such was the aspect of philosophical and historical criticism in the Ministries and Committees. The Censors, who had to answer for every omission, were seized with a panic; even in their dreams they performed only heroic exploits in red ink. We know, forsooth, the dreams of the Censor Krasóvsky, "my watch-dog," as Uvárov called him, "who has to watch that I may sleep in peace." The said Krasóvsky was, during sixty-one years' service, the pattern of a Censor; insisting above all on morality, would only permit in books pictures of women when they were clothed from the knee to the chin, forbade the expression "ardent prayer," and, aided by his worthy colleague, Kryłóv, the renegade from the Liberal views he had held when at Moscow University, reduced even the infamous Bulgárin to utter despair. The Slavophiles Aksákov, Cherkássky, and others were forbidden to write in any way whatever, for they were seen to be rebellious against Peter and the great expenditure which the introduction of European ways into Russia had imposed on her successors.

No better did it fare with rebellious Westernisers; and here we must, because of its direct consequences to literature, record the unheard-of severity with which the "Petrashévtsy" were suppressed. Petrashévsky, a Foreign Office official, was already suspected by the Third Section in 1845 as a Radical and the compiler of a dictionary, of course in MS., of words borrowed by the Russian language, with biting, satirical explanations. On Fridays he was visited by youthful politicians, among them Dostoévsky. They read aloud works by Oven and Fourrier, the "Paroles d'un Croyant" of Lamennais, and Bêlínsky's letter to Gógol; they debated and meditated the

establishment of a secret press or lithographic establishment. The meetings of this Society, which entered into connection with certain foreign coteries of a similar kind, were frequented not only by officers, but still more by students, civil servants, and bourgeois. Socialistic and anti-religious currents predominated over political and constitutional; they were thinking already of a propaganda among the masses, but no one had got beyond mere thoughts and proposals. The Minister Peróvsky—from whose family issued later the famous Nihilist Sophia Peróvskaya—who had got wind of it, succeeded in smuggling in his agent, who then founded a special Association among them. The ever-memorable feat of unmasking and convicting these harmless people was the *chef d'œuvre* of Liprandi; whilst Herzen always, and with justice, maintained that they were punished not because of any offences, but because of their opinions. The punishment was, even for Russia, a terrible, nay, a brutal one. On April 23, 1849, the "nest of malefactors" was broken up and carried to the Fortress of Peter and Paul. On December 22nd the sentence was read aloud at the place of execution; twenty-one "malefactors," Dostoévsky being the fourth among them, were to suffer death by shooting. After waiting for death almost half an hour they were respited and sent to the mines or companies of delinquents, and later stuck among the soldiers as privates. Even the Amnesty at the accession of Alexander II. did not extend to any of them. Dostoévsky obtained his ultimate liberation chiefly through the intervention of a former fellow-student, Todleben, the defender of Sebastopol.

Thus in Russia was an end made even of truth and humanity. Saltykóv's "Triumphant Swine," although he first dreamed it in Paris in 1881, had now become naked reality, and the first human voice that rose above the grunting sounded across the frontier from abroad.

CHAPTER X

SLAVOPHILES AND WESTERNISERS. ALEXANDER HERZEN

First appearance of the Slavophiles—Transfer of a philological style to a political party—Mental disagreement—Westernisers with and without Catholic leanings—Chaadáev, Kirêevsky—The religious political, and social creed of the Slavophiles—The Westernisers at Moscow—Herzen—His youth—First appearance of Iskander—His novel—His expatriation—Activity abroad, and return to Russian activity—His memoirs—Other memoir-writers of the time—Aksákov's family chronicle.

ALREADY, in the last years of Alexander I., under the eyes of such Censors as Krasóvsky and Birukóv, to whom Pushkin addressed his well-known letters in verse, every critical thought had had to flee from printed to manuscript literature and to private conversations. Under Nicholas the Russians were to be altogether relieved from the burden of thinking; to all its other monopolies the Government added this one, as it had but lately, by the establishment of the *Government Intelligencer*, secured to itself the monopoly of prating. The introduction of it, to the despair of the officials entrusted with it, originated with the "Arzamasite" Count Blúdov, the continuer of Karamzín's History, who wrote not a line more of it, and compiler of the Report on December 14, 1825, which "had better have been left wholly unwritten" (Herzen). And yet criticism or the present as of the past could not be suppressed; Russians visited Europe, and Europeans came among them and described what they saw, Joseph de Maistre, de Custine, and Baron Haxthausen, who under Aksákov's guidance displayed the Russian "Mir" (Commune) and common

tenure before an astonished world. De Custine's book (1849) was in particular a bitter pill; his revelations concerning Peter and the comedy of Catherine II., the "Empire de façades," *Russie policée non civilisée*, hit the right spot, his eyes saw insultingly much. The apology for official Russia by Gréch, like Catherine's old refutation of Chappe's Report, was, on the other hand, contemptible.

The aims and sympathies of thinking Russians, which in the eighteenth century were still harmonious and differed scarcely by shades, now branched off in opposite directions. The most unfruitful course and least frequented was the one tending to Catholicism, which took its rise from Joseph de Maistre and the St. Petersburg Jesuits. The latter had always complained that Russia had evaded the salutary influence of Rome, and thrown herself into the arms *de ces misérables Grecs du Bas Empire*, that the new reform had been nurtured on the blasphemies of the Encyclopædists. This idea Chaadáev took in part, and developed out of it his own, which he laid down in his "Lettres sur la Philosophie de l'Histoire" addressed to a lady. The first letter Nadêzhdin published in Russian in his *Moscow Telescope* in 1836; since Griboêdov's satire nothing has had such an electrifying effect.

He envied the Catholic world its glorious past, its traditions, the continuity of its development, and stated the fact of Russian poverty, discontinuity, and alien condition.

"Nous ne sommes ni de l'Occident ni de l'Orient, et nous n'avons les traditions ni de l'un ni de l'autre. Placés comme en dehors des temps, l'education universelle du genre humain ne nous a pas atteint. Nous ne vivons que dans le présent le plus etroit, sans passé et sans avenir, au milieu d'un calme . . . plat. Isolés par une destinée étrange du mouvement universel de l'humanité, nous n'avons rien recueilli non plus des idées traditives du genre humain. . . . Il n'y a point chez nous de développement intime, de progrès naturels, les nouvelles idées balayent les anciennes, parce qu'elles ne viennent pas de celles-là et qu'elles nous tombent je ne sais d'où . . . les meilleures idées, faute de liaison on de suite, stériles eblouissements se paralysent dans nos cerveaux. . . . Solitaires dans le monde nous n'avons

rien donné au monde, nous n'avons rien appris au monde, nous n'avons pas versé une seule idée dans la masse des idées humaines, nous n'avons en rien contribué au progrès de l'esprit humain, et tout ce qui nous est revenu de ce progrès nous l'avons defiguré . . . pas une pensée utile n'a germé sur le sol stérile de notre patrie, pas une verité grande ne s'est élancée du milieu de nous."

It was the unvarnished truth, the eloquent indictment of Society—the Government was expressly excepted, because it concerned itself with this *progrès* to the best of its power—its thoughtlessness and frivolity. In the country where even quicksilver congeals there is no set idea, and, accordingly, the letter was dated from Nekropolis, *i.e.*, Moscow. The concentration, the weight of this indictment, struck terror; it was not to be refuted, therefore it angered people all the more. The consequences of this letter are already known to us. It was also —out of "consideration" for the author, once the hero of Kulm (1813), who wrote the "Defence of a Fool," and objected to the trailing of his idea in the street—ordained that he should not expose himself to the harmful effects of the prevailing cold and damp weather. Thus Herzen's contention was justified that the only polite man in St. Petersburg was Dubbelt, and he was chief of the gendarmes.

It did not at all occur to Chaadáev, as his poet-denouncer asserted, to hate all holy Russian traditions, to pusillanimously renounce them and kiss the Pope's toe. Others did that, ladies such as the authoress and patroness, Princess Volkónsky, who entertained Gógol at Rome, and great noblemen, *e.g.*, Prince Gagárin (afterwards a Jesuit, and editor of the works of Chaadáev), who became Catholics. Such a thing, be it said, occurred but seldom, for in Russia there is entire freedom of conscience; *i.e.*, whoever leaves the Established Church finds his way to Siberia, and loses the rights of his rank and his fortune, which falls to those who denounce him.[1]

Chaadáev was not a secret Catholic, but originally a

[1] Persons were allowed to remain by their own or their ancestral creeds, but if Orthodox, even only by force or in name, must not give up Orthodoxy. Real freedom has, it is said, lately been granted.—E. H. M.

"Westerner," only with a leaning towards the clerical. Kirêevsky said much the same as he in his "Nineteenth Century"; complained of the Chinese Wall that, in spite of Peter and Catherine, still separated his countrymen from Europe, setting forth what elements of culture their past offered them and their relations to that of Europe; that the States that participated in the same had their elements in themselves, and these were bound up with the nationality itself, whereas with Russia they could only be introduced by a violent breach with tradition and nationality, and from without. To seek what is national there means seeking the uncultured; to cultivate the national at the expense of novel European importations means driving away enlightenment, for where else than from Europe could they derive their elements? Of this work also they already know the result; in his involuntary banishment Kirêevsky then committed moral suicide, and returned years later to Moscow a sworn Slavophile.

Even his essay of 1832 was directed against "Slavophiles," against the more and more numerous accusers of the great Reformer, who talk about national and home-grown culture, blame what is borrowed, and want to lead men back to the indigenous and Old Russian. Already he made the acute remark that these antique leanings rest only on misunderstood repetition of foreign and Western ideas, which have a meaning there indeed but can have none in Russia. This was the first open denouncing and combating of "Slavophilism." The expression was unhappily chosen, and devised in order to ridicule the arch-reactionary Shishkóv and his "Slavonic" word monsters, and acquired a political and national meaning instead of a philological. Instead of "Slavophiles" one should rather say "Græcophiles," seeing that the Catholic Slavs, for instance, are an abomination to them as renegades from the real, *i.e.*, orthodox, Slavdom: Græcophiles, for even the Westernisers are Russophiles; the "Slavophiles" have not a monopoly of patriotism, and the name "reactionary," which Shishkóv deserves, does not exactly fit the "teaching." Instead of looking for others, such

as anti-European or Nationalist, we will make use of the conventional title. A short description of Slavophile ideas—which, according to Herzen, but lately crept out of graves and had not grown more sensible under the moist earth—is indispensable; since, for one thing, many of the leading elegant writers were under their influence, temporarily or permanently, and for another the conflict between them and the "Westernisers" fills important pages in Russian history, and one feels, when all were beaten down, at least from the Slavophile camp humane impulses, democratic principles, and a breath of protest against the official model and its sole way of salvation.

Out of Shcherbátov's moral indignation at the meanness of his contemporaries, out of Karamzín's ultra-Conservative protest against all progress, out of Shishkóv's reactionary hatred against modern ideas, had resulted that first ogling of the good old times, a *fable convenue*, in which one thinks to find the traces of Slavophilism. To this was added just dislike of the alien rule. When Alexander I. asked the deserving Yermólov what reward or distinction he desired, the General said, "Make me a German, Gosudár" (Sire). "Les Russes me font toujours du guignon,"[1] was the saying of Nicholas, who preferred the foreigners. Self-deception and national overrating, with deliberate or innocent falsification of all history, then caused the Slavophile *Fata Morgana* to arise. Romanticism, which deliberately cultivated local colour, the traditional and popular, and German metaphysics did their honest best to help, especially the latter. If ideas embody themselves in nations, and consequently in their literature as well, if at the same time, as was the case precisely in Europe in the forties, people inquired after the "Idea" of Slavdom, it was pardonable ambition that this idea should be conceived to be as great and brilliant as possible, as a reconciling of all the contradictions that disturbed Europe. The deliverance was to come from the East. That was believed by Chaadáev as much as by Herzen or by the leaders of the Slavophiles, Khomyakóv, Kirêevsky, and Aksákov, though by each of

[1] "Bad luck."—Tr.

them, to be sure, on different grounds. To Herzen, Bêlínsky, and Chaadáev, Russia was the blank scroll, the country which is to make its own the experience of the West without its struggles and labours, death and disruption, and in spite of all hindrances to perfect it. The Slavophiles saw Russia already in full possession of all elixirs of life: to get rid of all its maladies the West had but to learn from the Russians. These miracles of Russia were its Orthodoxy, Autocracy, and Communal Ownership. Whereas in Catholicism the despotism of the Church, which set itself above the State, and in Protestantism the tyranny of reason, which killed all feeling, distorted true Christianity, the latter had survived in its greatest purity in the truly humble and deeply-believing Orthodox Church, founded on the community, not the domination of the patriarchs and on democratic principles. While Western States came into being by conquest, and subsequently constitutions —*i.e.*, contracts—controlled the mutual distrust and jealousy of conquerors and conquered, the Russians called in their masters of their own accord, in full confidence entrusted to them all power and entire responsibility, and only reserved for themselves the necessary burdens, free life and acquisition, and moral independence. In Europe the constitution of houses and families leads, of necessity, to the feudal and aristocratic State: the system of majorities oppresses the minorities. In Russia the communal system could only lead up to a National Assembly with its decisions unanimous, not those of a majority, and a merely consultative Zémsky Sobór could allow of no aristocracy arising and would secure the preponderance to altruistic tendencies. Even the wife in Old Russia enjoyed an independence which her Western sister was bound to envy her.

This theory put forth good shoots, and was consequently regarded as opposition to the intolerant prevailing system and remorselessly suppressed. The Censorship pursued Slavophile publications to the utmost; only that for these noble shoots the disguising in the "múrmolka" (old Russian cap), letting the trousers down over the high boots, and the whole theological, philosophical, historical frippery were fairly super-

flous. Freedom of opinions and conscience, the rights of woman, love and comprehension of the people did not need to be quickened by fabulous tales about calling in the Varangs, Byzantine Christianity, &c. Moreover, the Slavophiles strongly reminded people of Chíchikov in the Second Part: he has had enough of the "Dead Souls"; he repents of them so bitterly that he means to buy property out of the money paid for them, and henceforward lead a highly moral life. In the same way they abused and cursed Peter's reforms, yet they retained the result of them undiminished, and only wanted to set up in "Old Russian" fashion on Catherine's and Peter's acquisitions. Real respect, except for their own love of independence, which was not to be turned aside by mockery or persecutions, is deserved only by their "Consciousness of a living soul in the people," which for a Bêlínsky was quite impossible, in whose eyes the people, the rough, uncouth mass, must first be moulded and kneaded by the lettered. "Their feelings were more penetrating than their understanding and conscience; in many Essays in Slavophile periodicals there is a perfect reek of torture-chambers, torn-out nostrils, excommunication and penance, and Monasteries of Solóvki; if they had the power they would outdo the Third Section. These are werewolves and corpses; from their demesne no living soul replies; they have wrenched their understanding, Procrustes-like, by feigned Orthodoxy and artificial cult of the people" (Herzen).

However, some distinction must be drawn among Slavophiles. There were some at St. Petersburg, Burachkóv, for instance, editor of the *Mayák* (*Beacon*), who interpreted Kopernik (Copernicus) as "Pokórnik," because it was only in his Slav "pokóra," or humility, that, by the grace of God, he was illumined before the haughty Europeans! Above such an idiot the Muscovites stood high, for only in Necropolis could the "dead" theory prosper. Even among them there were, again, degrees: the Siamese twins, Shevyryóv-Pogódin, editors of the *Moskvityánin*, paid court to the Government most assiduously. Pogódin and Bodyánsky further interested themselves, moreover, in all sorts of other Slavs, but their dry,

half-official Panslavism did not properly impress people. The younger staff of the *Moskvityánin*, including the talented writers Ostróvsky and Písemsky and the critics Grigóriev and Edelson, the poet Almázov, who came to the fore in the sixties with satirical poems and parodies (especially poisonous was his incompleted Epic Pamphlet, "The Socialists," with its ridicule of the Seminarists, their patrons and patronesses), had since 1851 totally renounced Panslavism and laid stress on the national Russian element and its "foundations."

The Slavophiles proper, as a factor of opposition to the St. Petersburg regime, were represented in the first instance by Khomyakóv, a man of extraordinary cultivation and power of will, the official poet and divine of the party, a dialectician of the first rank, and a sophist to whom debating in itself was a pleasure; his theological tracts, the defence of saving Orthodoxy, could at first only be printed abroad. Wearisome are his two tragedies of "Yermak" and "The Pseudo-Demetrius," while some of his poems cannot be denied lyric swing. We choose one, that "To Russia." The poet warns her against bombast:—

"'Be proud!' to thee have flatterers said,
[But the Slavophiles were just the worst of them.]
Land with the crown upon thy head.

* * * * *

More dread than thou was mighty Rome,
Lord of the Seven-ridged Hill,
Realisation of a dream
Of iron force and savage will.
Unbearable the fire of steel
In the hands of Altai's savage brood,
All buried in her heaps of gold
The Empress of the Western flood.
And what is Rome? The Mongols, where?
And Albion, feeble intrigues making,
Hides in her breast a dying groan
And o'er the precipice is shaking.

[This on the eve of the Crimean War, when the Russia of Nicholas toppled into the abyss!]

Unfruitful is all spirit of pride,
Untrusty's gold and steel gives way:
But firm is holiness' clear world
And strong the hand of them that pray.
But in that, with humility,
With true childlike simplicity,
With the heart's silence over all,
Thy Maker's message thou didst take.
To thee He gave a special call,
For thee a brighter lot did make—
To hold for all the world a store
Of sacrifice and action pure,
To keep the races' brotherhood,
Of living love a vessel sure,
The riches of a flaming faith
And right and justice cleansed of blood.

* * * * *

Oh, think on thine exalted lot,
The past within thy breast revive,
The spirit of life that there abides
Deep hidden, well to question strive.
Listen to that, and then embrace
With thy deep love each other nation,
Tell it the mystery of freedom,
Pour on it faith's illumination.
So thou in wondrous fame shalt stand
Above the sons of every land,
As that cærulean vault the sky,
Clear covering of God on high."

To this dominant note the whole Panslavic lyric poetry of a Khomyakóv, Týutchev, Almázov, and Iván Aksákov was attuned. Added to this were appeals to the young Eaglets, the Bulgars, Serfs, and Croats, to sever with brazen beaks the chains of Ottoman tyranny; to the Northern eagle to greet them loudly, in order that in the night of their slavery the bright light of freedom may comfort them; finally, the summons to unity of belief, which the Slav renegades of the West had forfeited by following sinful Rome, with complaints that at the pilgrimages to Kiev's holy places the Uniate brethren from Galicia and Volhynia did not appear, having been burnt at Poland's savage stakes or cajoled by its

uproarious feasts. That about the "stakes" was a falsehood, but Volhynia soon put in an appearance at Kiev. Hussar generals and gendarmes, Siberia, and Diocletian persecutions brought about this work of Charity and Faith.

This patriotic and didactic poetry breathes an idealising of Russia which wholly disregards the present and actual conditions, and rocks itself in haschish dreams of a rosy future. Khomyakóv and Aksákov, too, were at least so far sincere that they demanded of their chosen people self-examination, penance, and repentance for the yoke of slavery, for the black injustice of its courts, and for other Russian complaints, before that people should enter on its great mission of conferring on Europe true Christian freedom and enlightenment (those of the Third Section, the Censorship, and the most holy Synod?). And whence did these idealist enthusiasts derive the pledge of this mission? From the humility and patience, the *smirénie* and *dolgoterpênie*, of the Russian people as opposed to the haughtiness of the West. Nay, for Týutchev the Lord of Heaven, passing from one end to the other of it in Slavish guise, blessed Russia. That is indeed making a virtue of necessity! The Saviour as a Russian serf (not for nothing is the peasant simply called "Khrestiánin," perhaps to distinguish him from the masters as heathens?) is for that matter some decades in advance of Uhde's workman Saviour.

Into this choir of banded Slavs there came a glaring dissonance. Khomyákov and Aksákov mostly disregarded it. Not so Týutchev, who in 1831 sang of the Fall of Warsaw, and in 1863 of the Polish "Revolt," in different strains to be sure, the first time with words of comforting brotherly love, the second with hatred in his mouth, but essentially taking for granted or demanding the same—the death of the people. And when he welcomed the Slavonic Congress of 1867 he also spoke of a traitorous Judas who went his own way—evidently the Poles. The Slavophile interpretations of Slavonic brotherly love and Russia's world-mission are thus merely Charlatanism. To these "Idealists," strutting in their false humility, and plucking out European motes while disregarding Russian beams, we at any rate prefer the Russian

pessimists, who cling duly to Russian reality instead of to phantasmagorias, and would not even accept the Saviour if He came as a slave.

However, Iván Aksákov soon gave up verse. A far louder echo, in Europe even, was the prose of the President of the Slav Committee to find during the seventies, before and during the war in the East; Týutchev alone remained true to poetry, but he was a true lyrist, not a tribune of the people and publicist like Aksákov. Thus the Slavophile lyric poetry is something as conventional as their Theology and History, which was dealt with *en famille*. It was not by mere chance that they formed one great family. Aksákov married Týutchev's daughter; Khomyakóv's mother was a Kirêevsky. We must mention also the two brothers Kirêevsky: Ivan, who, by reason of the *European*, was under restraint and constantly suspected; and Peter, who brought back from his travels in the West deep disillusionment and the conviction of the incurable rottenness of the West and the soundness of the East, both essential dogmas of the Slavophile creed. Then there was the enthusiastic Constantine Aksákov, who was a recruit from the philosophical circle of Stankévich and their historian, together with Y. Samárin, their politician and jurist. From the endless debates at Moscow at the Yelágins', where the mother of the Kirêevskys did not share the "Slavic devilry" of her sons, and at the Aksákovs', these theories first slowly found their way into the periodicals of the forties—the *Moskvityánin* and others. Unfortunately, they also attacked matters which could not be openly defended by the champions of Western ideas and their salutary and indispensable significance to Russia, by Bêlínsky, who, like Aksákov, had belonged to the followers of Stankévich and Herzen.

Beside the philosophical circle of students at the University, there was also a socio-political one, which owned itself the heir and continuer of the work of the Decembrists, but its advanced convictions were soon materially modified by St. Simonism and Socialism. To this belonged Herzen, Ogaryóv, and others. They soon excited suspicion, and drew down persecutions on themselves. The circle was scattered, but gathered

itself together again later on, and enrolled more members, such as the Moscow Professor Granóvsky; but even here schisms were not wanting. Herzen and Bêlínsky were the most logical, becoming sheer atheists and Socialists, while Granóvsky and others held fast to the immortality of the soul and other Romantic tenets. The most important representative of the Westernising tendency, one who had no equal in Russia for wit and keenness, was Alexander Herzen. Had he been only a politician and partisan, we should scarcely notice him here, but he was a writer of eloquent literature and at the same time one of the most notable writers of Memoirs, not only of Russia, but of the nineteenth century, and deserves to be placed on a level with the great Russian names such as Turgénev.

Alexander Herzen (or Yákovlev, for his father, a nobleman and wealthy, married in Germany, but did not legalise the marriage in Russia, consequently his children counted as illegitimate, and might not bear their father's name, but were known as Herzen, as their father called their mother) has, in spite of his German name and his German mother, not a particle of German temperament. He is a Frenchman, something like Griboêdov, a Russian Voltaire, or like Paul Louis Courier, the noted pamphleteer. His first reading consisted of French novels and comedies in his father's library; then, with the melancholy poetical lad Ogaryóv (a noted lyric poet, later an *émigré* like Herzen: the bond of friendship lasted their lifetimes), he became enthusiastic for Karl Moor and Posa. The transition from Möros with the dagger in his robe and Tell at Küsznacht to December 14th and Nicholas I. was an easy one. Owing to his fondness for Natural Science he entered, in 1829, the Physical and Mathematical Faculty at the University. To that study he owes the exactness of his method and his dislike of all mysticism. Not very much, indeed, was learned; but, on the other hand, Liberal tenets and forbidden literature were zealously propagated. People grew enthusiastic over the Brussels, Paris, and Warsaw insurrections. All his life Herzen retained from this period his

holy admiration for the Decembrists, for the great minds of 1792 and 1793, and his sympathy with the Poles, which he paid for in 1863 with the ruin of his "Kólokol" ("Bell"). But soon St. Simonism quite drove away the "Béranger" leanings. The emancipation of woman and *la réhabilitation de la chair*, the freeing of humanity from monasticism, the justification and redemption of the flesh, the purifying baptism of the flesh as a Mass for dead Christianity, Herzen from that same period made the leading idea of his activity.

The young people had not, either at the University or after leaving it, made any attempt at any political association or union, although their almost exclusively oral propaganda continued. By means of letters and the like the police ferreted out this connection. At length Herzen was transferred to a distant Governmental capital, Perm, and afterwards to Vyátka, in civil employ, and under the supervision of the local authorities. Through Zhukóvsky he then succeeded in getting to Vladímir, then to Petersburg, where he had a fresh unpleasant difference with the gendarmes, and finally to Moscow. In January, 1847, he obtained, on the ground of the delicacy of Natásha, his cousin, whom he had abducted and married, a passport for abroad. He swore to himself never to return to St. Petersburg, that city "of the arbitrary rule, of blue, green, and motley polices, of bureaucratic disorder, of flunkeyish impudence, and of gendarme poetry." He never saw Russia again. When he left it he was already a well-known author, under the feigned name of Iskander.

He began to write early, trying his hand at the dramatic branch and the telling of stories. At Vyátka an incipient leaning to religious enthusiasm made itself apparent. He wrote scenes of a Nero and a William Penn play, with religious dissensions, in stilted tirades. But "it was not allotted to me to raise myself to the third heaven. I was born a complete child of earth. The daylight of the idea is more akin to me than the moonlike radiance of Fancy." He was hindered in all mysticism by his sciences, "without which the modern

man cannot find salvation. Without this wholesome sustenance, strict training of thought by facts, this nearness to the life around us, without humiliation before his independence there remains somewhere in his soul a monk's cell, and in it a mystical seed from which can grow and spread conceit as to his understanding."

He rose higher in his stories, especially in his novel, "Who Is To Blame?" (the blame consists in one following the impulse of the heart, *i.e.*, in fine, sheer chance). All are in the right, and the key of the situation is the impossibility of any way out, as he himself demonstrated on the strength of a kindred theme which had engaged his attention before. The hero of the work, Béltov, is one of the best portraitures of a "superfluous" man of the Nicholas period, such as Turgénev again and again introduced into his novels—a man of honour, full of the best intentions, cultivated, clever, enterprising, and yet totally futile, unable to become anything or grasp anything, to whose self it remains an unsolved riddle why exactly he goes on living. His misfortune begins even at his bringing up, which the honest Swiss directs on the common humanity principle, as if that were suitable to Russia. This quite "average" man then confesses to his teacher: "We Russians most frequently begin afresh, inheriting from our fathers only their property, movable and fixed, and even that we look after badly. If we wish to do anything, we find ourselves entering on a boundless steppe. In all directions roads lie open to us, only when you take them you do not arrive anywhere. Such, then, is our many-sided inactivity, our busy idleness."

The "common humanity" tendency still held good at the University, where young men of like principles banded together in visionary fashion for life and ideals that were totally alien to it. At length, somewhat gratingly, the doors that led into life opened to them, but here only disappointments awaited them. The reality of an office or the barrack could only frighten off these independent, self-confident idealists. Béltov afterwards goes abroad, where he spends ten years, and during that time begins on everything, or almost every-

thing, and carries out nothing, or almost nothing—has been a doctor aspirant, an artist, and so forth, astonished the Germans by his versatility and the French by his depth. But while these Germans and Frenchmen worked and created, he achieved nothing. He is over thirty years old, his ideas have grown manly, but he himself yet remains in his nonage, constantly preparing for life like a sixteen-year-old lad instead of living. It is impossible for him to adapt himself to men and circumstances, or use his powers and attainments to good purpose. He will on his return, as a most interesting and misunderstood hero, irresistibly attract like a magnet the pretty wife of the honest pedant of the Grammar School, will shatter the happiness of her life, and depart again.

This clever and delightful story holds a crowd of personal reminiscences: his own tutor, his father, his Natásha in some of the traits of Lubóv ("Love"), with her most sensitive nature, and her emancipation from prejudices, which comes about apparently easily and gaily, but in reality not without internal struggles; above all, Herzen himself is Béltov, even to his medical studies and to repetitions of his very words—*e.g.*, concerning the tricks of Fate, human perversity, which allows the happiness of the moment to slip through its fingers, and so on, all from Herzen's own diaries. It is almost a sort of autobiography, like Lérmontov's in "A Hero of Our Day." In spite of all the well-earned success of this interesting and realistic novel, Herzen did not deceive himself for a moment. "I do not know the way to write stories," he confesses in one place, and in a later passage he does not recount his hero's love-story—"The Muses have denied me the power of depicting Love. O Hatred, thee will I sing." Indeed, he often interrupts the narrative by the insertion of psychological biographies of his characters, every one drastic, vivid, and instructive, but, as it were, falling out of the framework of the whole. On the other hand, with short sketches he succeeded admirably. When after some years he tried his hand at a fresh story, "Duty Before All," with its masterly description of the panic on the sudden arrival of the new squire in the village, his friend, very rightly, expressed the opinion that

he would not finish it nor write another. Besides being a born tribune of the people, Herzen was too much alive to the interests of the moment for quiet objective creation to satisfy him. On the other hand, the desire of his heart was to make a mock of all sorts of oafish Slavophiles, to parody their style, to ridicule the "raw-edged, ungarnished" Pogódins, as also the sweetish but flavourless Shevyryóvs, like a blancmange that has not set and has no bitter almonds, the Burachkóvs and Yazýkovs; and at the same time he purposed publishing scientific and philosophical letters full of matter.

When he had at last shaken the dust of Russia off his feet his course lay towards the French Eldorado, but his correspondence from the Avenue Marigny soon showed his dreadful disappointment, and soon too the possibility ceased of printing any sort of a line in Russia. Italy's spring of liberty enticed him irresistibly, yet he goes back to France again to see his last hopes shattered; and cured for ever of all Liberal illusions, he proceeds to England. His frame of mind—for heavy personal losses fell on him too, such as deaths; nay, in one case Béltov himself became Cruciférsky, and lost, like him, his Lubóv—became constantly more embittered and splenetic. What he wrote was mostly in philosophical and political brochures, which appeared in translations in German. He was to end like Béltov—one wholly "unnecessary" and "disabled" man more. On March 1, 1849, he addressed a farewell to his friends in Russia, explaining why he never would return: "An invincible disinclination, a strong inward voice that forebodes something, keeps me from passing the boundaries of the realm of mists, of arbitrariness, of silent withering away, of unnoted perishing, of tortures with the mouth gagged. I tear myself free from my people, and yet I remain with it, in its whole life I sympathise only with the bitter cry of its proletarian and the desperate courage of his friends. I sacrifice everything to the dignity of man and freedom of speech. *Here in a foreign land I am your uncensured speech, your free voice.* Also, it is nearly time to make Europe acquainted with Russia. They shall know

what they dread." He had, he said, let himself be carried away by events in Paris and Italy, had "sacrificed much time, feeling, strength, and means to the cause of the West; now he felt himself superfluous in it" (1853).

He was by no means disappointed by the ideas of the West, *i.e.*, those on universal History, which he too loved and considered indispensable to Russia, but by the "corrupt West" itself he was disenchanted as much as any Slavophile. He confused, that is, the West, with its *bourgeoisie*, with that "conglomerated mediocrity" which he hated like the plague, and looked on as a destruction of Art as well; it must lead to a Chinese state of things, and on its absence in Russia he congratulated his countrymen. Like the Slavophiles and Chernyshévsky, he was enthusiastic about the communal ownership of land, the "Mir," and its elections, for this survival of patriarchalism, "from which a new social life may grow up which is as wanting to Europe as our black soil." No less did he delight in Russian emancipation, absence of precedent, and lack of the historical fetters cannon-balls which the Western drags after him, thanks to historic tradition. "The Russian is hindered by no fence, no prohibition, no gravestone, no boundary-stone. He can go where he will, and knows nothing but wastes and expanses. We are free because we begin with our own liberation, independent, have nothing to love or to honour. A Russian will never be a Protestant nor *juste milieu*. 'The barbarians have lizards' eyes,' said even Herodotus, for in comparison with the West—the Romans—we are the barbarians, the Teutons. Our civilisation is external, our corrupt morals quite crude. Under the powder the bristles show out; under the paint the brownness breaks through. We dispose of an infinity of the cunning of savages and the shrinking of slaves. We are ready to give a box on the ears at haphazard, and fall on our knees without fault. But I repeat persistently that we have fallen behind the devouring fineness, resting on hereditary infection, of Western corruption. Cultivation with us has served as a purgatory and a guarantee . . . and has formed a dividing line which has

separated off much that was disgusting."[1] One sees what an optimist lay hid in Herzen, and sees at the same time what close relations this Westerniser had with the Slavophiles. His friends of that persuasion directly accused him of undermining the respect for the West that was so necessary to Russia and of going ahead too fast.

Such are the fundamental ideas which run through his French and German letters and pamphlets of the years 1847–52, which we refrain from speaking of more in detail, nay, even mentioning. His personal losses did not break him; for, as he (never suspecting how nearly it touched himself) laid down, even in 1842, in an essay that kept a friend of his from suicide, "The individual in us, the heart, should not exclusively claim the man; his mind should hover between it and the Idea, general human interests, and not be based only on the sand of personal love." Thus when, in 1852, in the solitude of the world's capital he proceeded to examine his past reproachfully and sadly, he grew strong in doing so, and plucked up courage for fresh work, wanted to submit everything to the judgment of "his own"; and thus came into being his autobiographical and, at the same time, principal work, a gem of Russian literature, "Byloe i Dumy" ("My Past and my Thoughts")—"a tombstone and a confession, occurrences and meditations, biography and reflection, things heard and things seen, that have given pain and been lived through, reminiscences and again reminiscences, a repetition of life that rises up pallid in word and memory," written for the most part between 1852 and 1855, with appendices as well, in five parts. Yet the most important is in the fifth part, that on account of which all the rest was written, which, to Turgénev's thinking, was written with tears and his heart's blood, but not printed. Will the family always keep from us this portion of the history of Natásha? Herzen himself had led us to expect it.

It was not for the first time that he tried his hand at autobiography. As early as 1838 he wrote "Memoirs of a Young

[1] This is a summary of Herzen's views, not his actual words; the inverted commas are put in to make direct speech possible.—E. H. M.

Man," *i.e.*, himself, in three parts—Childhood, Youth (the chapter on the University had to be left out), and Years of Roaming, with the satire on Vyátka-Malínóv; all of it, especially the third part, was in the style and tone of Heine's "Reisebilder," and he printed it in 1841. Its success incited him to his novel. Afterwards he kept for a time a voluminous diary of his reading. His present work differed by its tone from the crudity of the diary and from the "Memoirs," which he could not use. He wrote them at that time to while away his absence from Natásha. Now he had no reason to hurry. Much time had been needed for his varied experience to clear to a transparent thought, not comforting, rather melancholy, but reconciling through comprehension, without which there may be sincerity, but no truth. The book was to be no historic monograph, only a reflection of History in the man who had accidentally come in its way. Hence, especially towards the end, it entirely frays out into single sketches, as if the author were afraid by methodical remodelling from a single casting to obliterate the proper tone and mood of the first casting, hence these buildings out and added storeys and wings, and yet a certain unity in the whole. The most exact cohesion is observed by the first two volumes (vi. and vii. in the collected edition).

These Memoirs, although they have for their subject no particular complications or catastrophes, only everyday incidents and encounters with men that are not everyday, can be read like the most thrilling novel; the masterly portraitures of a Chaadáev, of the Slavophiles, of the architect Wilberg at Vyátka, of the Poles at Perm, of his colleagues at the University, and the various victims of administrative arbitrariness. The author also dwells particularly on the Moscow philanthropist Dr. Haas, active as Prince Nekhlúdov in "Resurrection"—"whose memory shall not be stifled under the rank weeds of official obituaries, which celebrate the virtues of the two highest classes which do not come to light until their bodies are mouldering." Then the pictures of Russian trials, prisons, justice; how the incendiaries at Moscow were suborned, and the impressive funeral of the

Jewish boy-colonist; of the town of Vyátka and its officials and statisticians, who, under the heading "Moral Observations," make the entry, "There are no Jews here," and so on, to performances at the theatre at Moscow and Granóvsky's lectures. On the same level come the pictures of London and Paris, of the magnates of the European Revolutionary Committee, of Count Worzel, of the Russian "splenetic" people as successors of the "superfluous," behind whom again the uncultured Seminarists crop up. The observer proceeds with absolutely scientific exactness, probes every phenomenon to the bottom, unveils their relations and importance, restores the cohesion, puts life into everything and explains it regularly—he supplies no brutal photographs, subsequently painted over gaudily, but harmoniously toned-down pictures, which in every stroke betray the hand of the master, everything couched in diction of wonderful precision, with French clearness and French wit. Delightful are his numerous ironical and sarcastic remarks, his reckoning with the system of Nicholas, from the letter of apology which he makes the Tsar and the merchant of the First Guild write to Rothschild, down to his generals, "the contemporary actors of the Drill Book and the *dramatis personæ* of the Court Guide, for whom a place can be found in Ministries or in disciplinary companies, but certainly not in a story," in contrast to the generals of 1812. Especially he hated St. Petersburg, of which he writes in a diary that it was a wonderful victory over Nature. "Three degrees northward begins the healthy north, three degrees southward a temperate zone; the six that lie between with the agreeable neighbourhood of the sea and of all sorts of rivers, lakes, swamps, and healing or poisonous waters, its easterly position, and with the Winter Palace, eight Ministries, and three Polices close at hand, not to mention the most holy Synod and all the exalted family with their German relatives, the whole forming a region of eternal dampness, moral and physical vapour, mental and bodily fog." A special essay on St. Petersburg praised the city in which are to be seen various strata of men—men who write incessantly, *i.e.*, civil servants; men who write hardly ever, *i.e.*, our literary men;

and men who not only never write, but never read, *i.e.*, the superior and subaltern officers of the Household; lions and lionesses, tigers and tigresses; folks that are unlike any animal or even any man and yet feel themselves as much at home in St. Petersburg as a fish in water. Lastly are to be seen poets in the Third Section of the Private Chancery and the same Third Section as it was when dealing with poets. A fine reminder falls especially to Uvárov, "also a Prometheus *de nos jours*, who stole light not from Jupiter, but from men, not sung of by Glínka" (before he had been talking of Humboldt at Moscow and his being serenaded by Glínka), "but by Pushkin" (in the bloodthirsty satire on Licinius Recovering), "a true commercial traveller in the mart of enlightenment, who retains in his memory the patterns of all the Sciences." Thus one pillar after another of the system is placed in the pillory and branded. Herzen's Memoirs are an unsurpassed contribution to the illuminating of the age, as well as a psychological and artistic *chef d'œuvre* of the first rank.

We might now treat of other memoir-writers of that time. The abundance of such literature is almost inexhaustible—jottings of the Decembrists, which Herzen took a special delight in publishing in London; reminiscences of Rylêev, Yakúshkin, and others, or of the voluntary informers like Wigel, the informer Chaadáev, or the Censors—of Professor Nikiténko, *e.g.*, who daily jotted down the official attacks on thought, knowledge, and writers. Out of this abundance, let us mention only one work which, although radically different in matter, tone, and style, might be placed opposite the Herzen Memorial—the Family Chronicle of the elder Aksákov, the father of the two Moscow Slavophiles—if it could even in the remotest way be compared in fulness of ideas with the life-creation of the great emigrant. To be sure, the Family Chronicle was first published in 1856, but Aksákov began to write it before that; the first portions of it came out as early as 1847, and we may with justice ascribe them to the Epoch of Nicholas. At bottom they belong to the eighteenth century and the age of Alexander.

Before the eyes of the old man awoke his early childhood,

the beauty of the Orenburg country, the peculiarities of his ancestors, his grandfather, his great-aunt, her husband, life in the provincial town of Ufá in winter, at the High School and the newly-opened University of Kazán, which sent its alumnus to St. Petersburg with brilliant certificates for subjects which were not taught there. Already at the High School Aksákov had taken part in a school paper, *Arcadian Shepherd-lads*, and continued his rhyming at St. Petersburg, but the sentimental admirer of Karamzín went over to Shishkóv, and tells the loveliest things about the "Slavenophile Besêda," where mediocrity and tediousness combined; Derzhávin awaited immortality from his impossible plays and more possible Anacreontics; Count Khvostóv, the poet, accepted the most biting epigrams of his cousin as sheer praise; where the criticisms were even shallower than the panegyrics, where the artless Slavophile Shishkóv, whose first wife was a Lutheran and his second a Catholic and a Pole, yet who hated everything Catholic and Polish, expounded detached lines of the "Petriad" of Prince Shikhmátov, and was charmed by the beauty and purity of its language, without noticing that he evoked only the utterest mockery; for instance, he raved about "The Wiles of *Earthly* Needs," where the modern reader would understand *Dung-heap*. We are in antediluvian times simply, and consort with the "patriot" Glínka, who, with all his exceptional fondness for the French language and versification, opened the patriotic crusade against the French, and poured over every one of his verses and poems the same sauce of "Faith, Fidelity, and Dontsý" (Don Cossacks)—with Slavophiles who are convinced that the time of Peter and Catherine II. meant the Heroic Age and the true Old Russia. The later jottings, which grew more and more loose, were disappointing. Aksákov lingered far too long about literary grandees like Shatróv, the descendant of a Persian; the blind Nikólev, who, like the King of Hanover, denied his blindness, and talked of the cleanness of his linen to the amusement of those present; Ilyín, who was crazy on the head of aristocratic acquaintances, and so on. Whoever takes an interest in paradisiacal relations, such as Grigorióvich has depicted in his

"Country Roads," will happen here upon a quarry of anecdotes and curiosities. On the other hand, the reader was entranced by the perfectly simple description, made without any literary pretension, and hence with the most striking success—portraits of the people of the "good old times," tyrants and despots, often simple criminals like Kurotésov (*i.e.*, Kuroêdov), unaccountable in their caprices, before whom their families, servants, and peasants trembled: even the old lady flew before the fury of the "old man" into the woods, though he was deceived and led by the nose by the most foolish. The glimpse of the manners and views of that patriarchal time is beyond price: the good-nature and roughness of these men of the steppes, the unculturedness of the surroundings, the primitiveness and naturalness of all. The meaning of the picture, however, is first determined for himself by the reader. Aksákov contents himself just with observation and reproducing what he has observed. He is himself a backwoodsman, for he lived forty years in the Orenburg region, with the sharpened senses belonging thereto, and has written whole books on the taking of fishes and butterflies, on hunting with falcon and hawk (we are half in Asia), with nets and traps, and on the life and habits of beasts of the chase; these might be set beside the best chapters of White's Selborne, and passed through several editions. The picturesqueness and vividness of his diction, a pearl of Russian descriptive and narrative prose, vied with the ampleness and exactness of his observations. Thus the author, as an enthusiastic admirer of the "classical" theatre, had begun with translations from Molière, with "Russian" transpositions of Boileau's Satires, what he himself afterwards characterised as nonsense, and with epigrams, agreed with Písarev in finding in the *vaudeville* the acme of human Art, until, under the influence of Gógol, he turned to reality, and out of his Orenburg reminiscences he brought to light first the "Snowstorm" (like Tolstoy), and then other treasures. His pictures offer no history, for they are history itself. No sharper contrast is conceivable than between this wholly objective "Homeric" reproduction of things seen and experienced and the sub-

jective, ironical, "been through it all," indignant manner of Herzen. And yet both are illumined with the radiance of true poetry beneath the veil of melancholy and longing for the irrevocable days of youth. In both, also, antediluvian Russia is finally buried—the Russia of serfdom and barrack drills, of the "fear of God" and stupidity, of boundless caprice of bureaucrats and peculation which began directly the threshold of the Imperial workroom was crossed, of the silence of the grave, and endless suffering. Under the armour of snow and ice all reasonable humane life in this wilderness seemed turned to stone for ever.

CHAPTER XI

MODERN TIMES (1855–1905). CRITICISM.

On the eve of reform—Influence of Herzen, journalist and author—Reforms : standstill in the same—Reaction : enhancing of the same up to the White Terror—Influence of criticism in the fifties and sixties, of Chernyshévsky, Dobrolúbov and Písarev—The organic criticism of Grigóriev and Strákhov—The æsthetic and idealistic criticism of Volýnsky and Merezhkóvsky—Some expositions of the History of Literature.

LIKE the Epic, the history of Russia loves repetitions. The reign of the humane pupil of Zhukóvsky, Alexander II., recalls startlingly that of Alexander I., as the later years of Nicholas, at least as regards literature, signified the return of Paul's reign of terror. They repaid Russia the Western revolutions of 1848, just as the former had once, not less innocently, had to expiate the French. An external catastrophe, this time the Crimean War, made imperative the alteration of the official "Time Table." The need for sweeping reforms was universally felt; above all, a stop had to be put to the hitherto favourite plan of throttling all truth, stifling every decent word. What harm this suppression of opinion had wrought people were all agreed: the most loyal circles (even the gendarmerie officer Gromeka) cursed it heartily, and one must read the subsequent accusations of the Slavophiles—Iván Aksákov, for instance—against this mental Terror, in order to realise how, years later, the sheer remembrance of it angered the best and most conservative men. A relaxing of the gag of the Censorship was indispensable, if only because the truth about Russian conditions, and in its most undesirable form,

was told without hindrance abroad, and, partly through Polish agency, found its way into Russia.

Herzen had never been able wholly to lose himself in individual life, else his sojourn at Moscow would have amply satisfied him. When the heaviest blows of Fate now fell on him his salvation was—Russia; the service of the community soothed his personal sufferings. A theorist and a critic, he was not born for a politician or for a propaganda of action, but circumstances forced upon him a political rôle. Behind him stood no political party; the great effect he produced is explained by the coincidence of his personal sympathies with the temper of men's minds in Russia. He only formulated clearly and sharply what was in the air, what all the progressives demanded, what the Government itself recognised: at first in the *Polar Star*, recalling the Decembrists, with chapters out of his memoirs and so-called forbidden poems and reminiscences; and from July 1, 1857 on in the *Bell* (*Kólokol*) with the inscription *Vivos voco*. This monthly, afterwards weekly, paper counted in 1863 some 2,500 subscribers in Russia, among them the Emperor. In the Preface to the first number Herzen claimed only the freeing of speech from the Censorship, of the peasant from the landowner, of the tax-paying classes from the stick. But his language grew still sharper when the work of reform seemed not to get beyond good intentions and fine words, and this brusquerie was made a complaint against Herzen by moderate Liberals like Chícherin. They also had no approval for his keen criticism of "dying" Europe, or the sapping of a faith which they believed to be essential to Russia. Moreover, they were satisfied in their demands by the official reforms, the great work of Liberation of February 19, 1861, which turned over twenty-one millions of "souls" into men; the great judicial reform of 1864 with its advocates and juries, the abolition of severe floggings in 1863, the University Statute of 1863, which, however, was less satisfactory; the establishment of local self-government in the Zémstvo (Local Council) in 1864; the new Valûev Statute on the Censorship of 1865, which to be sure was the least satisfactory of all: the Censorship

had meanwhile been transferred from the Ministry of Instruction to that of the Interior. To Herzen, on the other hand, all this was a mere instalment—the first preparatory steps. He became still more extreme under the influence of that Moscow member of the Philosophical Club, the Hegelian Bakúnin, who, having escaped from Kamchatka, became one of the leaders of the revolutionary movement in Europe. Now for the first time people in Russia turned against Herzen, Katkóv taking the lead in the *Russian Messenger* in 1862. The rising in Poland in 1863 brought on the crisis. Out of a mere feeling of justice, Herzen had always been a friend of the Polish cause, although he never concealed from himself that it was only ostensibly revolutionary, but in reality embodied a purely national idea, hence supplying nothing new to the complicated, laboriously-to-be-worked-out formula of the future social order. It might, indeed, awaken warm sympathies in others, but never could become their own work; for only non-national interests can, by their nature, be the possession of all. According to his practice, what he had written in 1853 he printed in 1863—at the wrong time. Katkóv at once adopted the extreme patriotic standpoint, and carried by his energetic words all public opinion along with him, even victoriously sustaining the struggle with Valúev and his Censorship, as the conduct of the Government seemed to him much too lukewarm. The number of subscribers to the *Moscow News* doubled, that of the *Bell* sank from 2,500 to 500, and never rose again properly. Herzen's part was played out. Only in the *Kólokol* had it been possible before to throw light on the doings of individuals—his correspondents went as high as the highest spheres—to deal with the Pánins and Zakrévskys. This exceptional position now came to an end with the increase of freedom of the Press at home: the attempt to publish the *Kólokol* in French proved fruitless. His political propaganda fell silent; it would no longer have found any response. Even the revolutionary party placed itself in sharp opposition to him. When he reprobated Karakózov's attempt on the Tsar, and denounced all political assassinations as something barbaric

or decadent, the Moscow and Paris revolutionary centres issued a most solemn protest against him.

The reason for his estrangement from the revolutionaries, and the *coups de main* in the Bakúnin style, to which Ogaryóv also had become a complete convert, lay deeper. After the Polish fiasco Herzen revised other things also, what he called his "Wheelabouts *à contre-cœur*," in which he unwillingly did what he wanted not to do, notably the axioms of Bakúnin's catechism in his "Letters to an Old Comrade." He emphasised his fondness for slow, gradual development, and repudiated the violent revolutionary methods: "You cannot set peoples free against their will: only our enemy, not we, is well equipped, we must not irritate him. The old order is strong through general recognition: to bid people 'Believe not' is as forcible as 'Believe.' For the representatives of the old truth which has become present untruth to be called to account for it would be foolish, considering that property, family, Church and State, have been powerful educating formulas in human liberation and development: one must only show them that because of the awakened consciousness of those without property their further reign is impossible, must show them the danger and the possibility of salvation. But out of the old world all that deserves it shall be preserved; everything exceptional, many-sided, that is not a hindrance, may be left to its fate. Instead of needlessly destroying the power of the State, let us utilise it for the solution of the social problem; the social question has already lost its ideal character, has passed from the stage of youth and religious veneration into that of full age." Herzen thus does not believe at all in the seriousness of people who prefer the rough violence of destruction to development and compromises. Needful is his sermon to his own and to his enemies, a great work of love, which may preserve the mental heritage of mankind against which the forces of destruction would turn. In this respect Christianity, Islam, and the French Revolution, like true iconoclasts, sinned sufficiently: a feud against knowledge and art as something aristocratic was to him an abomination.

To give utterance to such talk and own to it in the circle

in which Herzen lived required more self-reliance and courage than to grasp at extremes in all questions. Thus Herzen slowly withdrew from the revolutionary propaganda and intended again to devote himself exclusively to literary work. Alas! his days were already numbered: he died while yet in full vigour, January 21, 1870. But from his last years we possess wonderful instances of his knowledge of men and the perfect depiction of social and national types. His picture of the Petrashévtsy, those mistrustful, weary, passionate self-observers and self-accusers without sincerity—this "crippled," lost Nicholaitan generation—is classical. And then the description of the emigration after 1862, these young people who wanted nothing to do with cultivation, or Art, or ideas, and recognised nothing outside their range of thought, who, when they asked for a programme of Herzen, merely understood by it a formulating of their own ideas, and who looked down on Herzen and his like as on respectable veterans. Thus was fulfilled what Polevóy had once prophesied to Herzen with a shake of the head, when he had dubbed him a Conservative for treating St. Simonism as a mere chimera. "The time will come when to you, too, as a reward for a whole lifetime of exertion and labour some youth will say, smiling, 'Get you away, antiquated being!'" "Stripping off all to the last clout, our *enfants terribles* showed themselves proudly just as their mothers bore them: but they bore them badly, not at all like ordinary sturdy youths, but as heirs of the bad and unwholesome life of the lower order of St. Petersburg. Instead of athletic muscles and youthful nudity there were displayed sad traces of hereditary anæmia, traces of long-standing diseases, and various types of fetters and neck-chains. Few of them proceeded from the people: the antechamber, the barrack, the seminary, the granges of small landowners, topsy-turvied to the extreme, remained preserved in blood and brain without forfeiting their distinguishing marks: nakedness did not cover them, but uncovered them. It laid bare that their systematic brusquerie, their coarse and impudent language, had nothing in common with the harmless and artless roughness of the peasant, but very much indeed with the acquired habits of

the coterie of the clerks, of the market booth, or the servants' hall of a gentleman's house. Our black soil still needs much draining."

With this influence of the "Free Russian Typography" in London—where Herzen had secret memoirs and forbidden poems, *i.e.*, such as had been circulating in manuscript, printed—went side by side after 1856 the so-called "Indictment Literature," which in verse and prose exposed rooted evil usages and the patriarchal jog-trot, and indulged in rosy hopes on the theme how far progress had already gone, and how far the ripening process had advanced. Everything, to be sure, gave way before the great work of liberating the peasants, that peaceful revolution which, like every other in Russia, was inaugurated from above, and in spite of all secret and obstinate opposition carried through. He who should only judge of this struggle by the Press and literature of the day would certainly find himself disappointed. For after the good old evil custom, what kept all astir, made the young enthusiastic, and the nobility complain of undeserved lessening of its property, remained excluded from public life and relegated to secret committees and memoirs. Society and public opinion had for years, until the final deliverance, only this one interest; but the *Kólokol* alone spoke openly concerning the "baptized chattels" of the masters, that blot and eyesore of Russian life "which forces us to own, red with shame and with downcast eyes, that we stand lower than any nation in Europe"—on the necessity for speedy action, so that the disappointed peasant might not himself have recourse to the axe. This threat of the axe was repeated again in 1860 by his correspondents from Russia when an unreliable man (Pánin) was chosen to preside over the committee. But at length Milutín's work was got under cover. The son had accomplished what the father (and some of his advisers, especially Count Kiselóv) had regarded as indispensable without their having ventured on the great work. "*Nunc dimittis!*" cried the Kiselóvs, the elder Turgénev in his Paris exile, and the Liberals. Although some sacrifices might now be made to the embittered old Conservatives, such as removing Milutín, the work of

liberation itself was not to be undone; but this, according to the idea of some, was only to be the beginning of a complete reconstruction of Russia, and here there was at once a divergence of opinion.

For the impatient, Radical youth the "Indictment Literature," commonplace rhetoric following little aims with great means, could not suffice; the malcontents rallied round the *Contemporary* of Nekrásov, round Chernyshévsky and Dobrolúbov, and later round the *Russian Word* and Písarev. Here "Nihilism" took shape—a cause which owned no fixed revolutionary, political, or social programme, but exerted itself in a religious and philosophical sphere: atheists and materialists, the keenest critics and repudiators of the existing state of affairs, advocating the emancipation of the sexes, with republican leanings, but, above all, concerned with the cultivation of their own personality, with the watchwords of the guild (*artél*), and the enlightening of the people as panaceas for all ills. The younger generation was on their side, leaving the seminaries and streaming to the University: free lectures brought together the most motley audiences of both sexes. Never since then has St. Petersburg displayed so much interest even in learned disputations. In Sunday Schools the young taught the people in the Radical spirit: in the assemblies of the nobility the call already rang out for a Constitution.

To be sure dampers were soon put on this stormy movement. The Sunday Schools, reading-rooms, and chess clubs were closed, the *Contemporary* suspended, prominent Radicals imprisoned—Mikhaílov, for whom they even ventured to put a petition in circulation, Chernyshévsky, and Písarev; Dobrolúbov was already dead. The liberty of the students was curtailed: Katkóv could openly attack Herzen's "Utopias." The rejoinder was not wanting—disorders among the students, the St. Petersburg fires in May, 1862, proclamations by a Central Revolutionary Committee, which called for revenge and murder. The Polish insurrection made the situation worse. In face of the wavering of the Radicals, Katkóv's summons of patriotism into the lists attained thoroughgoing success; after which Katkóv, convinced that

Nihilism and Herzenism were only methods of the Polish (!) propaganda to weaken the Throne, hunted down all internal traitors as worse than any enemies from without. Still the work of reform was pushed forward, still the Liberals went with the Government. But the flood of Progress ebbed visibly; already voices were heard crying that the reforms were premature and went too far—University and Press were given up as the first scapegoats.

With the year 1866 the real reaction began to set in again. Karakózov's alarming attempt gave the excuse for making it appear that religion, property, and law were threatened by the party of subversion. The *Contemporary* and the *Russian Word* were abolished: Dmítri Tolstoy, as Minister of Obscuration, did all honour to Shishkóv and the other men of darkness of days gone by. Freedom of speech fled again to other countries, where, under the influence of Bakúnin, it quite occupied the ground of the International and anarchy. In Russia itself the enthusiasm for natural sciences, so characteristic of Nihilism (compare Písarev), declined, while in return Socialism spread among the young men: the study of social science became similarly the hall-mark of an advanced journalist of the seventies and eighties, such as Mikhailóvsky. Katkóv placed himself at the head of reactionary journalism, with his *Russian Messenger* and the *Moscow Gazette;* Nekrásov and Saltykóv defended the more Radical theory against him in the *Annals of the Fatherland* (*Otéchestvennyia Zapíski*); while the *Messenger of Europe* of Stásyulevich and the literary historian Pýpin and the *Gólos* (*Voice*) of Kraévsky represented the moderate Liberal view. Tolstoy gagged the Universities further, and carried the classical system through in the Grammar Schools. Nothing, or what was of slight importance, was altered in it by his successor, the Armenian Delánov—his countrymen were proud of the fact that the stupidest Armenian was good enough to be Minister of Education to the Russians —and the generals. In consequence of this system all the higher educational establishments in Russia are idle: every bond between teachers and taught is long since severed, but the wardens and "inspectors" flourished, police terriers,

on the staffs of the universities.[1] As the young men that were in opposition were deprived of all possibility of any sort of activity, they gave their exclusive attention to foreign literature, German social democracy, and the watchwords of Bakúnin, and endeavoured to mix with the people, to carry on a propaganda with manifestoes, which the people could not even read, let alone understand: such attempts often ended as Turgénev describes in "Virgin Soil." Soon, however, the crusade was extended to more receptive strata, to artisans and the intellectuals, and advanced formally from reprisals against the increasingly stern repression on the part of the Government to the crusade of action, assassinations and demonstrations, and terrorist organisations.

The war of 1877 brought a quickening of political interest and life. The voluntary sacrifices in the cause of the oppressed brethren in the Balkans, indignation at the frantic Turkish atrocities, the eddying phases of the struggle, kept the people on the strain. The anger at the surrender of so much that had already been won only lessened the prestige of the Government: the Radical and Constitutional tide was again visibly in process of rising. Rash attempts at assassination hindered this movement, and it was totally shattered by the disastrous 1st of March, 1881, the blackest day in Russian history: like December 14th, it threw all progress back for decades. Of the Constitution which was already granted there was now and for a long while to come no question. All the more increased the influence of the Grand Inquisitor Pobêdonóstsev and his accomplices. Suppressions, regulations of all kinds, administrative caprice, and the banishing of thousands formed the quintessence of the science of government of the White Terror. Saltykóv's *Annals of the Fatherland* were suppressed, public opinion was silent, enslaved and colourless as never before. A fresh change on the throne brought no relief; on the contrary, the twentieth century began with Plehve's system and his White Terror, which, *mutatis mutandis*, might remind one of the days of Paul and the close of Nicholas's reign. One instance which closely

[1] Written in 1905; things are better now.—E. H. M.

concerns Literary History also may cast light on the raging of this official Terror.

One of the most favourite writers of feuilletons was latterly the "Old Gentleman," Alexander Amphiteátrov. One fine morning he was suddenly arrested, and since then nothing has been heard of him. He lived, no doubt, at Minusínsk or some other equally delightful, rather less remote spot, where a man has the choice between suicide and alcoholic poisoning. And the reason? Harmless feuilletons. The first especially was quite insignificant, the second and third, which the *Rossía* did not produce, were considered more caustic—an account of the death of old Obmánov ("Cheat") and the "Accession and First Oratorical Performance with the Senseless Dreamings" of the youthful Níka Obmánov, his marriage and so forth. This was an allegory transparent to clumsiness, but people had got accustomed to Russian "allegories" since Shchedrín and the "Story of Glúpov."

When Rylêev directly attacked Arakchéev, though, to be sure, without actually naming the name, in his Roman "allegory," and no one, from the man himself onward, was in doubt as to who the favourite was, Arakchéev, the most corrupt of mortals, remained silent over the terrible attack, as if it did not apply to him, and that was the wisest thing that he could do. So, too, "The Obmánovs" only attracted attention when the senseless persecution of Amphiteátrov and his paper drew public attention to it; but for this Asiatic barbarism a cock would scarcely have crowed over it, and he and his many writings—novels, short stories, and the like—would soon have been forgotten for ever: now he was immortal, and with him the system that went so gloriously far. "New Russia" thus ended exactly in the same way as the old one of Nicholas. Just as in 1855, again in 1905 a disaster from without brought about a new, and let us hope this time a more thorough, alteration of the "Time Table."

We premise these stray remarks, which were only meant to recall to the foreign reader certain dates, in order to bring the nature of the journals and critics, their effect upon society and

their influence, into some relation with one another and with the period itself. It was the ungagging of the Press that first created a Press in Russia; before that there were only colourless sheets and gullible readers: attempts at a purpose, whether Westernising or Slavophile, were stifled by the Benkendorfs and Dubbelts. Bêlínsky was saved from Dubbelt's attentions by death and Herzen by flight, but in return the *Contemporary* had become quite colourless. It gained colour after 1855, and with it the new periodicals that appeared—the *Russian Speech*, *Russian Messenger*, &c. This colour was given them less by their *belles lettres* than by their critical portion, which, indeed, was the outcome of the former but aimed at objects which had nothing to do with it—this is the strength and weakness of Russian criticism. Its strength in that the ostensibly "literary" or even "æsthetic" criticism became a moral and socio-political power: it delighted in making use of those literary productions which were suited to the spreading of its ideas and deliberately neglected others often far more important in a literary sense; it relegated æsthetics to ladies' society, and turned its critical report into a sort of pulpit for moral and social preaching. This most "warlike" criticism, one-sided and purposeful, achieved a colossal effect among the young men, to whom the essays of a Chernyshévsky, Dobrolúbov, and a Písarev became revelations, the language of eloquent and fiery agitators, not critics. Therein also lay its weakness, prejudice, and perverseness. One must never let oneself be deceived by its judgments: it extolled or decried the author and his work, as Antonóvich did Turgénev in the *Contemporary* because of his Bazárov, not because of the value or no value of his performance, but for his opinions, his ideas—nay, for the journal in which he published his work. Thus this criticism is often, in spite of all its giftedness, its zeal and fire, only a mockery of all criticism. The work only serves as a peg on which to hang their own views. An example of this unliterary criticism of literary works, this purely journalistic sort, had been given already by Bêlínsky as far as the way he was gagged admitted of it. His successors no longer put restraint upon themselves. This is no reproach; we simply

state the fact and fully recognise the necessity and usefulness of the method. With a backward society and its mental nonage, its childish dread of dogmas and authorities, this criticism was a means which was sanctified by the end—the spreading of modern and free opinions, the establishment of new ideals. Unhappily, Russian literary criticism has remained till to-day almost solely journalistic, *i.e.*, didactic and partisan. See how even now it treats the most interesting, exceptional, and mighty of all Russians, Dostoévsky, merely because he does not fit into the Radical mould! how unjust it has been towards others! how it has extolled to the clouds the representatives of its own camp! True, there was also a literary and æsthetic criticism, but against the journalistic, the "real," it could not properly hold its own.

The most important among the "æsthetics" were Druzhínin and Ánnenkov. The former, author of "Polínka Sachs," a prominent feuilletonist, died prematurely. He was especially noted also as founder of the society, still working, for the support of necessitous literary men and scholars. He took up the cudgels above all against the onesidedness of criticism, against its want of consideration, or total ignorance, *e.g.*, of English literature, against the adherence to pattern of its judgment, its dense repetition instead of a due investigation of current and too hasty judgments, and its love for a moral. He greeted the new men of talent, the new poets, and extolled the energy of Literature and the soundness of its trend. More weighty was the word of Ánnenkov, the admirer of Gógol and Turgénev's friend, who is prominent in the annals of Literature by his editing of Pushkin's works and the materials for his biography, to whom we also owe a series of "literary" reminiscences of Gógol at Rome, of Písemsky, and other writers of the forties. In his criticisms he dwelt on the necessary and natural connection (apart from any set purpose of the artist's) between works of art and thought and life, the distinguishing marks of every genuine work of art, the onesidedness of utilitarianism, didacticism in light literature, and the prejudices of Bêlínsky; yet it cannot be denied that he at times, in his outcry for the setting free of Art from the bondage of

ideas, was himself biassed, and placed the purely æsthetic principle too much in the foreground. Hence his æsthetic proclivity met with contradiction, especially from the talented, high-spirited — nay, passionate and ungoverned — Apollón Grigóriev, a thoroughly Russian figure. When he reached a certain step of development his pressing forward ceased: he contented himself with repetition, with plagiarising from himself; a reckless life, with the up and down of wildest excesses and most painful self-accusation, went together with the most ideal endeavour and moral sincerity. He is the founder of "organic" criticism in contrast to the purely æstheticising and to the "historical" or realistic. To him a work of art is the organic product of popular life and the historic moment; hence emphasising of the national principle, hence enthusiasm for Gógol and the plays of Ostróvsky, in which he quite rightly recognised more than a mere satirical, condemnatory purpose. Owing to this dwelling on the co-ordination of Art and the national soil, even though Slavophile and fellow-worker of Pogódin on the *Moskvityánin*, he will not adopt the whole teaching, with its Byzantinism, its future world-wide part for Russia; he contracts it, limits it to the Russian *póchva—i.e.*, "soil" or foundation—and gives the impulse to the teaching of the *póchvenniki* Dostoévsky, Strakhóv, and Danilévsky. The unboundedness of his admiration for Ostróvsky, the prolixity and dimness of his diction, the strangeness of his terminology, notably diminished the value of his considerable achievements to his contemporaries (he died in 1864). He was often not taken wholly in earnest, yet his influence on Dostoévsky was decisive. From him dates that opposition or division of men into the marauding and the gentle type which we constantly meet with in Dostoévsky: he followed up these types, not only in life and literature, but even among literary men, could never quite reconcile himself to protest or satire, which reminded him of the bird of prey type as opposed to the dove type, and in order to countenance his enthusiasm for Gógol leant on his longing for the ideal, for self-perfection, and, for all his laughter, the viewless tears which the shallow public did not

perceive. Above all, he demanded from Art sincerity, as being its very life.

The same demand, though in a different sense, was made on Art by the realist critics, Chernyshévsky, Dobrolúbov, and Písarev. The succession of these names is not merely a chronological one, it also denotes the rising scale of their talents: all these have in common their blameless, morally ideal life; they are admirable as sheer characters, martyrs to their convictions, especially Chernyshévsky, upon whom the most terrible and unprincipled persecution fell. The International Literary Conference of 1881 petitioned, once again in vain, the Russian Government for a mitigation of his fate, which was not granted till after twenty years' "Siberia," mines and fetters; and Písarev also wrote the greater part of his Essays in the Fortress of Peter and Paul. His crime was a mere offence against the Censorship, while Chernyshévsky's at least consisted in alleged relations with Herzen. Katkóv triumphed, Russia was saved from the "Nihilist" hydra, but the reckoning for Chernyshévsky and Písarev was paid in the attempts on the Tsar.

If we talk of a rising scale of talent, we mean only literary, else Dobrolúbov and Písarev could not bear comparison with Chernyshévsky, "the great scholar" (so Marx says). He himself, however, gave up his literary activity speedily and gladly when he found a suitable substitute in Dobrolúbov. He felt attracted by journalistic and socialistic propaganda; but this side of his activity—his combating of all metaphysics, his advocacy of materialism, of the importance of natural science, his criticism of Mill, his championship of the Russian village community—do not come within the scope of our inquiry. Questions of literary criticism were only dealt with in his thesis for his degree, "The Æsthetic Relations of Art and Reality," and his first studies in the *Contemporary* on Gógol and the criticism of his contemporaries, Bêlínsky, Lessing, and on some points of current literature. Little as this is, it gives the keynote to the whole of journalistic criticism: Dobrolúbov and Písarev simply followed suit.

After the rejection of all metaphysics Chernyshévsky decides

that the beautiful is life; hence Art has only to subserve the illustrating of life, and can never replace or come up to reality. This restricting of the beautiful and subordination of Art was authoritative to his disciples. To the passionate, headlong controversialist who despised no means of confounding his opponent or taking him by surprise, the cool, sober, solid Dobrolúbov was inferior in originality of conception, in solidity of historical attainment (Chernyshévsky translated Schlosser's "Universal History" and after his return from Siberia the great "Weber" as well), and in breadth of view, but was far his superior in clearness, logicalness, vividness of description, and æsthetic feeling (he himself had a poetic gift), and in wit and humour as well. Even his literary interests were primarily journalistic: pedagogical and philosophical literature—nay, even the political phenomena of foreign countries (Montalembert and Cavour) attracted him in reality more than poems, novels, and comedies, but his analyses of Goncharóv's "Oblómov," Turgénev's "On the Eve," and Ostróvsky's comedies are among the most brilliant of his writings; only they are not literary or æsthetic analyses in our sense. Let an example show what they are.

Turgénev's charming short story, "Ásya," afforded Chernyshévsky a pretext to accuse Russian society of a total want of will or higher interests. People act differently in other countries, but then they are other countries. The proper meaning and purpose of this brilliant criticism, however, lay somewhere else; it was an allegory; for just as the "Russian at the Rendezvous" (the title of the sketch) showed himself quite unworthy of the occasion, doffed the Romeo and the Max, and stood revealed a mere Zakhár Sidórich, who has no heed for anything but "*preference*" at a kopeck a point, so the nobility proves on the eve of the emancipation of the peasants, when the suit of many hundred years' standing was at length to be decided, that it was not equal to the occasion. In the same style, roughly, are the "Reviews" of Dobrolúbov. The women in Oblómov, for instance, do not concern him at all, as he does not wish to be a judge of

women's hearts. In return he seeks out the Oblómov type all through literature, and shows that Chátsky, Onêgin, Pechórin, and Rúdin are but Oblómovs in disguise. He gave it all out so clearly and convincingly that he made the young generation enthusiastic, for it recognised in this realism, this condemning of all idealism, the only security for successful development.

Dobrolúbov early worked himself to death; he died in 1861, at the age of twenty-four. His successor was not to be the one chosen out by Chernyshévsky, and coming, like them all, from clerical schools, Antonóvich, who was not wanting in culture and zeal, but in literary talent, tact, and moderation—compare his scandalous controversy with the "younger men" of the *Russian Speech*—but precisely the antagonist of the *Contemporary* and chief pillar of the *Russian Speech*, Písarev. In literary talent and æsthetic feeling the iconoclast of all æstheticism and thorn in the flesh of Pushkin excelled them all. In his brusquely partial way, he only followed out to its consequences Chernyshévsky's non-æsthetic theory. He tabooed poetry and light literature, advising Saltykóv to give up art and write popular pamphlets—of course, scientific ones. He denied any profit from poetry, Pushkin and the rest. Even for that reason it is not worth while to press home here these gross exaggerations and paradoxes because Písarev did not take them very seriously. He had allowed himself once to be led away into them in the heat of the conflict, and then went on because he meant his sledge-hammer blows not so much for poetry itself, as for the Conservatives, who made it a pretext, and their reactionary epicureanism—indeed he had for real poetry more and higher appreciation than many of its confessed admirers. Also his critical essays had for their purpose making the way clear for the type of the "thinking realist." He recognised his incarnation in Turgénev's "Bazárov"; and whereas Antonóvich in the *Contemporary*, and after him to this day the representatives of "Liberal" criticism, recognise in "Bazárov" a box on the ears dealt to the youth of the day, he got so enthusiastic over the

"Nihilists" of Turgénev's story that he wrote regular commentaries on the type and as if in the same sense. The reaction of 1866 strangled indeed both conflicting Radical organs, the *Contemporary* being already notoriously on the decline. In 1868 Písarev died, aged twenty-seven—"Whom the gods love dies young." They preserved him from many a disillusionment.

A similar influence to Bêlínsky, Dobrolúbov, or Písarev no Russian critic since them has attained. We can thus pass over the remainder briefly. The most important name in the Progressist camp was that of Mikhaílovsky, who died in 1904—for years the critic of the *Annals of the Fatherland*, up to its suppression, he reminds us so far of Chernyshévsky that he, too, is essentially a sociologist and critic of Spencer and Darwin, not a literary critic. His solid learning, the originality of his mind, his upholding of the subjective principle against the English, the blamelessness, earnestness, and zeal of his almost forty years' journalistic service, and his humanity enforce our respect. Whether his literary judgment, *e.g.*, of Dostoévsky, was equally accurate and impartial, whether he did not rate too high phenomena of the "Nationalist" persuasion who appealed to him, we can here leave out of the count. Other representatives of this school—Protopópov, &c.—are far less prominent. Skabichévsky needs mentioning, not because of his most narrow-minded judgment, but because of his collecting of rich material, for his reliable and conscientious labour, as in his "History of the Most Recent Russian Literature," *i.e.*, from 1848 onwards, a work which has attained to four editions, on the data of which I largely rely, and his "Sketches from the History of the Russian Censorship, 1700–1863." The Conservative and Slavophile camp has no sort of noteworthy critics to point to after Grigóriev; the most important would be Strákhov, whom one must allow to have a fine literary sense. He, too, was not a literary critic, but a journalist. His article on the Polish Question, when denounced by Katkóv, led to the suppression of Dostoévsky's *Age*, on which he was a collaborator. He is specially well known by his "Struggle

with the West in Russian Literature," in which was a detailed estimate of Herzen. As representative and continuator of the Grigórievs' principles he was naturally the sworn opponent of Nihilism, of Antonóvich, and the whole *Contemporary* writing under the pseudonym "Kosítsa." His æsthetic views were shared by the St. Petersburg Professor of Literature, Orest Miller, a most attractive and kindly personality, in whose case the partisan Liberal criticism has on its conscience the ostracism of a man who was himself to become a victim of the police. His lectures on recent Russian literature are a very meritorious performance. Rozánov and others are less characteristic.

Strákhov's name is inseparably coupled with that of Danilévsky, one of the former Petrashévtsy, whose book, which remained unnoticed at its first appearance in 1869, he published afresh, and attracted general attention to it. It is the last word of Slavophilism, "Russia and Europe." The fanciful notions of brotherhood and a mission no longer play a part. Emphasis is laid on the difference and aloofness of Russia from Europe, the unalterableness of the cultural types, which do not allow of being transferred from one people to another. Danilévsky asserted and defended this fixity of type even against Darwin. From this fixity results the necessity of being and remaining a Russian, of rejecting all foreign alterations in Russian dress and way of living, all foreign innovations, conceptions, and ideas. There was a sharp controversy between Danilévsky (or, rather, his editor, Strakhóv) and Vladímir Solovióv (younger son of the well-known Moscow historian), whose scientific career was cut short for ever by one of those accidents peculiar to Russia and incomprehensible to the foreigner, as in the case of the well-known sociologist and ethnologist Kovalévsky. The moral philosopher and theologian Solovióv is one of the most interesting phenomena of modern Russia and its mental fermentation—a fearless, fiery proclaimer of the truth, without thought for himself, unselfish, serving only the idea, lastly a contrast to all. His great merit is in times of absolute positivism, nay, indifference to all theory and to metaphysics, to have drawn attention to the "eternal"

questions. This believing Christian—not indeed in the strictly dogmatical sense—proclaimed a revising restoration of the ailing Church which, in his view, was only to be had at the price of the recognition of Rome by Moscow, a new union of the Church. Himself once a Slavophile, he combated most keenly the modern, narrow-minded Slavophilism. He distinguished, indeed, the various grades of that doctrine, its "Fathers," Khomyakóv and Aksákov, with their demand for freedom of thought and conscience, with their aversion from unfruitful cosmopolitanism, with their demand for that living intercourse with his own people which alone rescues a man from the killing isolation of egotistical vegetation. With these he had much in common; all the more harshly did he turn on Nationalists of the type of Katkóv, the brutal admirers of brute force, hammering at them alone, and against the youngest Slavophiles like Danilévsky, who would like to deify ethnographical peculiarities. True, he too had a high faith in Russia. In a poem—for he was poetically gifted also, and a collection passed through several editions—called "Ex Oriente Lux" he asks—

> "O Russia, in prevision lofty
> Thou art by a proud thought enticed:
> Which is the East at which thou aimest,
> The East of Xerxes or of Christ?"

For Russia's existence he is naturally unconcerned; he demands a worthy existence. The fault of the Slavophiles did not lie in their ascribing a great mission to Russia, only in their laying too little stress on the moral conditions of that mission. They might call the Russians more loudly a collective Messiah, only they should have borne in mind that a Messiah must act as such, not as a Barabbas. Hence the importance to his patriotism of the inquiry after Russia's sins, whereas in Slavophilism there cast its slough a zoological patriotism, which freed the nation from serving ideals, and made of it an object of worship. His enthusiastic and eloquent voice became silent early; in 1900 the tired wanderer passed into that eternal rest which he had so often hailed.

"In morning mist, with unsure steps, I went
Towards mysterious and wondrous shores.
The dawn still battled with the last few stars,
Dreams still were flying, and, possessed by dreams,
My soul was praying unto unknown gods.

In the cold light of day my lonely path,
As erst, I tread towards an unknown land,
The mist has cleared, and plainly sees the eye
How hard the uphill road and still how far,
How far away all that was in my dreams.

And until midnight, with no timid steps,
I shall go on towards the wished-for shores
To where upon the hill beneath new stars,
All flaming bright with fires of victory,
There stands awaiting me my promised fane."

It was not granted him to carry his great works of moral philosophy on a religious basis to an end. His high-flown plans—a commentary on the Scriptures, a translation of Plato—were abruptly nipped in the bud. There only appeared his "Justification of Good," his most important work, together with his "National Question in Russia" and the "Moral Principles of Life," with his cry for modesty towards oneself, which leads to asceticism; for pity towards one's fellows, which becomes altruism, *i.e.*, truth and justice; for piety towards the supernatural element which is developed in religion. The defence of great moral principles in lofty poetic language with the glow of inner conviction, with brilliant dialectic and ample knowledge is his greatest merit, doubly great in a country whose own moral and philosophical literature, whose mental inertness, makes friends most easily with the latest and most vapid truth, and intoxicates itself with it (*cf.* the words of Vyázemsky above), as was the case with the positivism of the sixties and seventies and the Marxism of the nineties. Indeed, for a long time the latter seemed to be going to sweep away all nationalism and subjectivism for ever. To-day it has ebbed again. In spite of the Slav Charity Committee, of the publicist Komaróv and the Slavist Lamánsky, the Slavophile movement seems finally buried, at least in

so far as it extended to the "Slav brothers." People have now far nearer and far more important tasks to perform.

An isolated position in modern Russian Literature is occupied by Volýnsky (Flekser), the critical idealist and enthusiastic champion of the cult of poetry, æsthetics, and philosophy. Thorough philosophical training of the mind is wanting to most Russian critics, hence their depreciation of abstract thinking, of theoretic bases in the knowledge and estimating of the beautiful. The translator and commentator of Spinoza and Kant, the thorough judge of Hegel and Schopenhauer, who even to Chernyshévsky were in many cases merely names, subjected from his idealistic standpoint the history of Russian criticism to its keenest test since Bêlínsky, showed how even the latter, only superficially acquainted with Hegel's philosophy, was bound to be false to idealism, and forced literary criticism into false paths along which Chernyshévsky and others, with greater knowledge, but without his poetical temperament, followed him blindly. He proved the vaunting, the injustice, the misunderstandings, of this school, how it confused idealism with sentimentalism and fought against it. He made patent the monstrosities of Chernyshévsky's dissertation and Písarev's iconoclasm, the gaps in their knowledge, the superficiality of their argument, the ignoring or ridiculing to death of inconvenient opponents. His studies appeared in the *Northern Messenger*, and were reprinted from it in 1896, under the title "Russian Critics." Because the critic has preserved his independence, awakened the Liberal tradition out of its sleep, and ventured to tell it unpleasant truths, he has been regularly tabooed by the Press, and after the *Northern Messenger* was suppressed they made it impossible for him to get a hearing in a magazine, and he had to adopt book-form. In this he wrote his deeply perspicacious studies on the "Book of Wrath," *i.e.*, the "Demons" of Dostoévsky, and is now preparing similar ones on the "Brothers Karamázov." He regularly determines the patterns after which æsthetic criticism ought to be fashioned if it wishes to be fair to the intentions of the artist and the importance of his creations. As opposed to the biassed gabble of ordinary Russian criticism, these studies refresh one like an

emancipation. Only a Volýnsky, indeed, was capable of such a thing, of whose high æsthetic, philosophical, and historical culture his work on Leonardo da Vinci—also published in German—and his studies on the "Primitives" furnish guarantees. Side by side with Volýnsky let D. Merezhkóvsky be mentioned as a representative of higher criticism, who in commenting on works of art produces works of art, and to whom everything commonplace, partisan, or utilitarian in the sanctuary of art seems a profanation. To be sure, we do not here refer to the well-meant but insignificant little work "On the Causes of Decay and the New Currents in Contemporary Russian Literature," 1893, but much rather to his studies on Tolstoy and Dostoévsky, which are partly to be had in German also—"Tolstoy and Dostoévsky as Men and as Artists" (1903); while the second, more comprehensive volume and far more interesting, "The Religion of Tolstoy and Dostoévsky," is still wanting. While the first part lingers over the externals of Art, Style, and Humanity, the second penetrates to the heart of the fundamental religious views of the two great Russians, the one realistic and material, the other a mystic. Merezhkóvsky, to be sure, follows also aims of his own, a religious regeneration, a combating of Russian irreligion, and is thus more hampered and more biassed than Vyázemsky, and takes delight in forced and far-fetched interpretations. But what a vivifying, thought-inspiring, deeply penetrating criticism as compared with the superficial pattern which usually masquerades under that name! A certain animosity against Tolstoy is undeniable, but it is not aimed at his person, only his teaching, at the rationalist and apostle of enlightenment. Perhaps much, too much, is said about Antichrist and Nietzsche. Often they are only the critic's own variations on some given theme instead of a discussion of the theme itself. He puts too much of his own religious creed into it. But what brilliant argument, what startling combinations, what flowing zeal, and yet, at the same time, what cautious probing! A better interpreter the two great Russians could not wish themselves, even though with him only the artist and the epic poet in Tolstoy may stand the fiery test, while the teacher is

most mercilessly mangled. To sum up one must, on the whole, grant that Merezhkóvsky is totally right.

Thus Russian criticism, in spite of its brilliant journalistic representatives and their fascinating influence on the young and their most modern ideal and æsthetic soaring which must yet compel general recognition, leaves much to be desired. Like it, Literary History is also a product of the new epoch. Before there were only dictionaries of writers and isolated studies, such as those of Prince Vyázemsky on von Vízin; only since 1855 has there been an exceptionally abundant, homogeneous, and conscientious activity in this province. This, to be sure, is not evenly divided; the most detailed studies of ages which have as yet no literature, of the so-called Old Russian scribedom up to Peter the Great, predominate. The reverence with which the most unimportant works—translations, editions, or mere copies—are subjected to the most minute and microscopic examinations of writing, language, and the like is truly touching. These essays now group themselves, on the one hand, round the publications of the "Society of Lovers of Ancient Literature," already reckoned by hundreds of numbers, reproductions in particular of old MSS., &c.; and, on the other, round the writings of the Second (Russian) Section of the Petersburg Academy of Sciences, the only one in all Russia, particularly round its "Izvêstia," or Bulletin. Here we might name a whole series of distinguished philologists—Sobolévsky, Shákhmatov, Vladímirov (History of Old Russian Literature), Abramóvich, Shchépkin, Ístrin, and so on—who, following the example of their former teachers, Sreznévsky and Jágich at St. Petersburg, and Tikhonrávov at Moscow, edit texts, set on foot researches as to filiation, *i.e.*, chroniclers' traditions, sources, &c., following Old Russian civilisation into its finest ramifications. As against this well-organised ants' work the study of the new epoch falls behind. The excellent literary works of a Galákhov and Porphýriev only go as far as Pushkin; Pýpin's four-volume History of Literature only to 1848, and even then the period since 1760 is described by the latter more and more disjointedly and hurriedly. Pýpin, a cousin of Chernyshévsky, and once under his guidance, a

most humane and Liberal-minded scholar, accomplished in a period of almost fifty years most exceptional results ; his really critical and methodical History of Literature, History of Russian Ethnography, History of Old Russian Narrative Literature (1859)—a model work—the editing of the works of Catherine the Great, but particularly the account of the literary and political currents under Alexander I. and Nicholas I., will always maintain an honourable place, if only by their carefully weighing and all-considering judgment, even though in places they may be dry and not free from repetitions and *longueurs*, which is partly explained by their appearance in magazines—the *European Messenger*, to the staff of which Pýpin belonged after the Government had brought about an abrupt ending to his career as a scholar. Of literary histories of the nineteenth century we may mention that of Solovióv (Andréevich), who treats all literature from the standpoint of the Peasant Question ; of Engelhardt (two vols., 1902), who portrays it by decades, and, renouncing any opinion of his own, resumes those of contemporaries, thus bringing together a material which, to the foreigner, is often quite inaccessible, and which the author of the present work has himself gratefully turned to account. Polevóy's popular History in three folio volumes (1900), which has run through several editions, may be mentioned because of its exceptionally abundant illustrations. If we are not satisfied with entire accounts of the nineteenth century, we must put forward with all the more insistence the crowd of excellent monographs devoted to authors, works, and movements. Concerning Zhukóvsky, a model and masterly work was furnished by the Academician A. Veselóvsky (1904), well-known throughout Europe for his studies in Comparative Literature ; for Bátyushkov a monumental edition of his writings was provided by Leoníd Máikov. Pushkin's bibliography embraces hundreds of names. On Lérmontov we may mention the studies of Kotlarévsky, Pýpin, Spasóvich, &c. Gógol's correspondence and materials for his biography were brought together by Shenrok ; Tikhonrávov edited his works ; there are also besides excellent studies by Kotlarévsky, &c. On the other hand, there are no mono-

graphs for the greater writers of the second half of the century; we must content ourselves with detached essays by Pýpin on Nekrásov, by Mikhailóvsky on Uspénsky, by Skabichévsky and Spasóvich on Kavélin, Chícherin, Soloviov, &c,, with the "recollections" of them of Ánnenkov, and their correspondence (Turgénev's Letters, &c.) Only a few of them took to the pen themselves to tell the story of their lives, though the poet Fet (Föth) notably did, and later Panáev. An inexhaustible well of information of all kinds is Barsukóv's many-volumed work on Pogódin, the Moscow Slavophile historian and publicist. Add to these a series of first-rate works like Golovín's History of the Russian Novel, Ivánov's of Russian Criticism, and the works of the well-known social historian Milukóv. Numerous collected editions, even of less important writers, ever since the days of the meritorious publisher Smirdín, now replaced by Suvórin and Pávlenkov, facilitate a general view. An ample abundance of biographical material, correspondence, reminiscences, and so forth is presented by the Russian historical magazines, notably the *Russian Archives* since 1870. Studies and sketches are furnished by the monthly *European* and *Russian Messengers*, and by the *Journal of the Ministry of Popular Education*, especially during recent years. Exceptionally meritorious are the half lexicons, half historical works of Vengérov, undertaken on the broadest basis, his biographical dictionary of Russian authors, his authorities for the same (a mere list of books, essays, notices of authors down to 1900, calculated for 250 printed sheets; the first goodly volume comes down to Gógol), his "Russian Poetry," often with a complete reproduction of the works or criticisms; the same man also edited the History of Russian Literature in the Russian Encyclopædia or "Brockhaus." We pass over bibliographies, although that is precisely the branch most cultivated and, just like the dictionaries of authors, preceded all literary histories, *e.g.*, the works of Sópikov, Gennádi, and Barténiev.

After this account of criticism and literary history in the most general outlines, we turn to literature itself, and assign the first and most ample space to the novel; from the number

of authors and the importance of their works, which, since 1880, have secured to Russian literature a European reputation, it can claim the same with justice. We shall proceed in so doing approximately chronologically, thus beginning with the so-called "belletrists" of the forties, *i.e.*, those who were brought under Bêlínsky's auspices.

CHAPTER XII

THE NOVEL. TURGÉNEV[1] AND GONCHARÓV

The Turgénevs—Ivàn Sergêevich as a poet, as the author of the "Annals of a Sportsman"—His foreignness—Appreciation of the author—His various works: "Rúdin," "A Nest of Gentlefolk," "On the Eve," "Fathers and Sons"—Controversy concerning the novel: What was planned and what attained?—Fiasco of the succeeding novels, especially of "Virgin Soil"—Close contact with Goncharóv in the choice of subjects and heroes—Goncharóv's trilogy of the men of the forties: "An Ordinary Story," "Oblómov," "The Landslip."

THE name of the Turgénevs, although a Tartar one, has a good sound. "They complained fearlessly" was their motto, from the ancestor whom the False Demetrius had stoned when with Pleshchéev he denounced his deception. The Director of the Moscow University School and his four sons we have already met with in Karamzín and Pushkin. The sons were thorough-paced Germans, and translated German, not only Kotzebue, and attracted the Gallicising Zhukóvsky to German literature. His bosom friend, Andrew Turgénev, a rising poet, died early. Nicholas Turgénev, author of the advanced "Theory of Taxation" (1817), was, contrary to all justice, condemned to death and died in banishment. Alexander we have also spoken of; he was placed under police supervision. These were thorough-going Liberals and Westernisers, Nicholas was once angry with Zhukóvsky because he would not treat in his poetry of the abolition of serfdom. Although belonging to another branch of the Turgénevs, the great novelist Iván Sergêevich

[1] A convenient translation is by Miss C. Garnett. (Heinemann, 1894–5.)

shares with his uncles and great-uncles their Radical and Westernising convictions, their hatred of slavery, their noble humane temperament, protesting against the realities of Russian life (even the philanthropy of Alexander in conjunction with Dr. Hase, whom we know from Herzen, had a combative and rebellious character), their interest in German and German literature and the sciences; even the poetic genius thought seriously of a Professorship. He began as a lyric and epic poet; indeed, during the forties, he was always known as "the poet," which he afterwards constantly repudiated, without reason; for even his short epical stories, notably "Parásha," showed that romantic hyperbole could not captivate him lastingly, and that he himself found the way back to the prose of life. It was not his University tutor, Pletnyóv, who encouraged him like a father, and found "something" in his poems, nor Bêlínsky, with whom he connected himself more closely in the name of Hegel, and with whom he was guilty of humorous naughtinesses (such as "The Priest"); but one of the passions of his life, the chase, that led him to his particular forte—the sketch and the short story.

During his roamings as a sportsman he acquired his feeling for Nature (he is the best landscape painter of the Russians, among whom that art is rare—they only have a feeling for men); he had made acquaintance with a quantity of interesting people—squires, strange and repulsive creatures; peasants idle and industrious, true children of Nature with a leaning towards the mystical and sober realists, almost rationalists, alert and surly; ostlers and huntsmen—himself among them—as also the manservant who initiated him into the secrets and beauties of the "Rossiad"; all knew how to tell about the good old times, in them often all distinguishing traits were wiped out, they depended on all sorts of caprice and accident. All this crowded under his pen. After one and another short story of ruffians and so on had passed unnoticed, his fortune was made by his first peasant sketch, "Khor and Kalínych," one of the "Notes of a Sportsman" (Zapíski Okhótnika), printed under the heading "Miscellaneous" in the *Contemporary* (1847). The first sketch was followed by two

dozen others (1847–51), which appeared collected in 1852, under the title aforesaid, and laid the foundation of his fame.

The collection was attuned to no uniform key; it presented in motley confusion aristocratic and peasant, nay, bourgeois pictures ("The Doctor," &c.). They were touched with easy humour, in places even satirical (against inhuman squires). Two things struck people particularly: such complete pictures of Nature as the rest in the wood, in the gloaming, the exhausting heat of midday, the charm of the summer night, where the horses are tethered, had never before been presented in Russian prose. Besides this, what impressed was delicacy and at the same time the manifest sympathy with which the peasant types were depicted without obtrusiveness—the author did not beg for pity for the unfortunate, as did, for instance, Grigorôvich; without gross conflict such as Pavlov had been unable to avoid fifteen years before; without bugbears of squires such as Nôvikov and Radíshchev outlined even in the eighteenth century. He chose, as if on purpose, peasant surroundings which could be depicted as commonplace and typical; and what had he not to tell of his peasants, of their abundant feelings, their healthy naturalness, great gifts of heart, and open minds! What a charming gallery of lads and children he assembled, for instance, in his "Bêzhin Meadow," the unvarnished, non-didactic, perfected Idyll of Russian Literature, at once artistic and human. Nay, this impression of a consistent, though only latent, championing of the "true" souls, against which their owners, the squires, had mostly no soul but only caprices and vices to set, so greatly predominated that the collection as a whole met with objection from the police sensitive-plants, although all the more biting sketches had been suppressed by the voluntary Censorship of the author. Add to this the "impudence" that he had actually set himself up against the better knowledge of the Minister of Education, Shikhmátov (not the author of the "Petreid," but a much stupider man), as to the insignificance of Gógol, and gave him on his death too warm an obituary in a Moscow paper (a St. Petersburg one would never have been guilty of such tactlessness). Reason enough to first lock him

up, he having long since been in bad odour for other games—friendship with "ill-disposed" persons such as Bêlínsky—and then banish him for two long years to his property. That was the one real and great service which the Government rendered to him and to Literature—apart from this it was not even represented at his funeral.

He was, be it known, one of the Asras who die in their loves: he remained faithful for ever to the affection once conceived. That affection was fixed on a foreigner, and the hater of all serfdom made himself the slave of that alien and her whole house and for her sake renounced Russia. For the present, however, he was compelled to make the best of Russian country and people, and to store up impressions, observations, and acquaintances. When, however, through the intercession of influential patrons, the ban was removed, he at once flew abroad, and from then to the end of his life only showed himself in Russia now and again for a constantly shorter period and at longer and longer intervals. He felt himself at home as a Baden bourgeois, as long as the French patriotism of Madame Viardot-Garcia allowed it. After the events of 1870 he adopted her and her husband's hatred of the Germans, and became a thoroughgoing Parisian and Republican. We dwell upon this in spite of the fact that biographical details—*i.e.*, gossip—have no place in Literary History. The fact is that even in the seventies and eighties Turgénev was regarded throughout Europe as a modern and contemporary author who painted the Russia of the day; nay, he himself fell into that mistake, drew supposed Russians of 1868, and as late as 1876 wrote to Saltykóv about his "Virgin Soil": "It might clear up many misunderstandings and so put me where it is my right to stand . . . perhaps it is destined for me yet to fire the heart of men," whereas his song had long since been sung. He knows and depicts only Russia before Reform, for the later Russia he lacked the direct familiarity which he himself always regarded as indispensable to an author. When he did try to depict it his attempts invariably failed, left the readers dissatisfied and a legacy of bitterness to the author.

Thus his sphere of work is narrowly limited in point of time as well as of form and matter. He lacked the powerful epical impulse—his power and love of shaping only sufficed for the short story; only once did he write a novel in two parts, and it perhaps had better have remained unwritten. Hence he gets quit of his heroes, as he always only wants them to serve him for one episode, in the most convenient way, by the falling of a tile from the roof, say: Bazárov dies of blood-poisoning, Insárov (in "On the Eve") of consumption, Rúdin on the Paris barricades—you can also turn things the other way round. And there is always the same thing in question; all his heroes, whether they are propagandists and revolutionaries, or blockheads and sluggards like the "marmot" Lavrétsky, rich or poor, handsome or ugly, old or young, engaged or single, run after petticoats; the same dish is always served up till we wonder how a self-respecting author can be guilty of such plagiarisms on himself, as, for instance, "Smoke" (1867) and directly afterwards "Spring Waters" (1871). The subject is as good as identical, only the political claptrap of the former is wanting in "The Waters," much to the advantage of the latter. In "Smoke" only the issue was different; in an optimistic fit our Schopenhauer made Virtue sit down to the table at which Vice had fed itself sick, whereas, as usual, there ought to have been only broken hearts as in "The Waters." To all his heroes the words of Bazárov apply: "The man who has staked his life on the card woman's love, and when it is beaten, lets himself go and gives in so that he is no longer fit for anything, is no man, no male being"—he is almost Turgénev. And then there is one more restriction regarding the matter: all the heroes are men of birth of the "good old times," predestined by Nature to doing nothing, because they can count on their "souls," who must supply them with the necessary means or very much more gratis, year in, year out. As the pigeons thus fly ready-roasted into their mouths, they do not ever need to change their recumbent posture, and can devote themselves unhindered to improving the state of the world or to mere digestion, as

may be their taste. Officials, whom he hated like Gógol, military men, priests, bourgeois, and so forth, never occur in his stories except as mere accessory figures. At most his knowledge extends to peasants and servants, and these come in chiefly in episodical parts, except in the "Annals of a Sportsman," to which he made additions subsequently.

He was a writer of the transition period, and felt and realised that himself. If chronology would not protest against it, one might class him as the proper novelist of the Nicholas period, the singer of Old Russia before the Emancipation, of the poetry of its manors lost among their old parks, of idle, good-hearted, cultured folks who dally away the time in billing and cooing, careless and happy, where their conscience or modern demands and cries do not disturb this idyll. Within this narrow limit he has created what is imperishable, yet his works do not prompt us to deeper contemplation. He is no inconvenient reminder, after the manner of Tolstoy and Dostoévsky; but then he is a complete master of form, and stands high above Tolstoy and Dostoévsky, to whom requirements of form often seemed quite unknown, and has been equalled, let alone surpassed, by no Russian and but few foreigners. He shrank from no trouble; he laboured and polished, somewhat as Pushkin did at his poems; he is, indeed, the Russian prose Pushkin, and is wrong in claiming Gógol as his ancestor. Besides this exquisite form, we have the pictures of Nature and the vicissitudes of Love, excepting ardent passion, which was alien to his character, and which he did not try to reproduce, depicted with unsurpassed mastery. But Nature and men have ever the breath of quiet, mournful resignation hovering round them; the joy of living, jubilation and shouting, he envies at a distance in others, like his Lavrétsky in the closing scene of the "Nest of Gentlefolk." His pessimism was not a later outcome of reading and weak health; it is as if born in him. Add to this his great culture, his solid knowledge —which is not gleaned together anyhow, like Bélínsky's, for instance; his humane temperament, in which one traces the former admirer of Georges Sand, whereas Balzac repelled

him ; the noble aristocratic mind which he so often exhibited during life and which animates his creations ; his independence of the caprices of those in authority as well as of those of the public ; and the ignoring of personal attacks, so that one has always the consciousness of consorting with one of the chosen. Besides this he is the pioneer of Russian Literature in the West. His many years' sojourn abroad—his brisk intercourse, less with the German than the French intellectual élite, as the table companion of the whole of modern literary Paris, the intimate of Flaubert, the patron of Zola (at least as regards Russia, where he exerted himself to circulate his works) the friend of the Goncourts, Daudet, and Maupassant—cleared the way for the Russians, especially Tolstoy, to Paris. His own works were fancied through Europe, particularly because, in spite of their Russian subjects, in sentiment—he is the most logical of all the advanced Westernisers, and knows no compromises with Slavophiles or Reaction—and in form they at once savoured of home. But it was not for his own works, it was for those of others, that he acted the propagandist. He made the French enthusiastic for "Peace and War"—one knows what it must have cost to argue a Frenchman into reading a novel in several volumes by a "barbarian"—through him they came to know and appreciate Tolstoy. What he himself was to the French Realists we may here leave out of the count.

After these general observations we should be absolved from any more detailed treatment if the history of the greater works, the reason for their triumphant reception or failure with the public, the minutiæ of their conception and interpretation, which, however incredibly, even to-day seem not finally settled, were devoid of interest as regards the history of the time and of society, but it is too instructive, too characteristic of Russian conditions, for one to be able to pass it by. We have in view to be sure only selected items—"Rúdin" (1856), "The Nest of Gentlefolk" (1859), "On the Eve" (1860), "Fathers and Sons" (1862), "Smoke" (1867), and "Virgin Soil" (1876).

His favourite plan is to test his heroes as to how they would show up at the rendezvous. Thus he deals with Rúdin and does him grave injustice. Rúdin is one of the many "talented" Russians—no other nation has so many geniuses or draws so many blanks with them—a man of honour through and through, who constantly sacrifices his own personal advantage, strikes no roots in bad soil however rich it may be, in whom burns the fire of the love of truth, whose words scatter much good seed in young souls. What more can one want? And yet Turgénev condemns him, as having no self-confidence, as belonging according to the famous prater Pigásov's classification to the crop-tailed dogs who succeed in nothing, is fiery in words and yet cold as ice; phrases have fretted him like moths, he could not get quit of them; he is idle, a despot at heart, not very full of knowledge, &c. But were not all men of birth so at that time? and how many of them would have been ready to sacrifice their personal advantage? To represent Rúdin in particular, who excels them all, mentally and morally, as an "empty" being, to put him so to shame "at the rendezvous," was a most problematical amusement, and most uncalled for seem to us the celebrated phrases, "Rúdin's misfortune consists in his not knowing Russia. Russia can get along without any of us, but not any of us without Russia. Cosmopolitanism is nonsense, the cosmopolitan" (presumably Rúdin) "a cypher, nay worse than a cypher. Outside nationality there is neither art, nor truth, nor life—nothing. Without a physiognomy there cannot even exist an ideal face, and only a perfectly vacuous one is possible without it." We shall also soon hear the direct contrary. Just now Turgénev is coquetting decidedly with the Slavophiles. The success of the novel, in spite of individual admirable figures, such as that of Pigásov, its marginal notes, anecdotes, and effective episodes, such as the "student gathering" with its miserable tea and its enthusiastic endless debates, was only a moderate one.

The greatest success was achieved by the "Nest of Gentlefolk," although the course of the narrative is much delayed by the family portraits at the beginning, as though he wished

to anticipate Zola's theory of heredity. In themselves, however, the portraits, going as far back as the eighteenth century and the Alexandrine period, are very interesting: as, for instance, the Anglomaniac, who after December 14th returns to Russian customs and to his respect for M. Izprávnik (the Police Commissary); then the good, honest, artless Lavrétsky; the Demosthenes of Poltava, Mikhalévich, an offshoot from Rúdin; and the Westerniser Pánshin—stupidity and arrogance embodied. The author seems to sail wholly in the Slavophile fairway, but he contents himself with the mere assertion that Lavrétsky had confuted the hollowhead, and twaddles himself like Khomyakóv of the necessary humble bowing down before and recognition of national truth. These form the gallery of men. Among the women Lisa stands out, having all the virtues that are wanting to the men—the lively sense of duty, the fear of hurting anybody, tenderness, kindness, gentleness, the mystical love of God. Now for the first time her inward peace is disturbed. She cannot bear up against the heavy, undeserved disappointment, and goes into a cloister—a touching picture. And not less touching is Lavrétsky when he blesses the youthful doings in the house that has now become quite strange to him and leaves it: "Hail, lonely age! Burn out, useless life!" The whole is a wonderfully complete picture of the manorial life of the old gentry, even to the stories of old Antony of the ridiculously cheap times and the gentlemen who were not subject to any Court. No "purpose"—for the joke against Pánshin is not to be taken seriously—mars the objective calm, and hence all the more touching is the narrative of shattered happiness, unrealised hopes, and broken hearts. Turgénev stood at the summit of his fame; his subtle judge Ánnenkov only thought—erroneously as the sequel showed—that he had by now exhausted to the last drop the mood which prompted his previous works, and that with the "Nest of Gentlefolk" he had freed himself for ever from the pictures and images which had for years disturbed him.

"On the Eve" moved decidedly on a lower plane. An ideal Russian girl recognises the insignificance of her admirers—

an artist, a professor, and a civil servant—and sacrifices herself to an alien and an alien cause, the Bulgarian Insárov, "on the eve" of a proposed setting free of his Bulgaria. Why she does so Shúbin, the artist, tells us: "We have as yet no one, no man, wherever one looks; all are either small fry, nibblers, petty Hamlets, self-tormentors or subterranean darkness and emptiness, or pourers from the hollow into the void, beaters of the water, cheap-Jacks, and others of that kidney. They have cultivated themselves to the most critical daintiness, are always feeling the pulse of their dear feelings and reporting to themselves, 'Look now what I feel, see now what I think!' When, pray, will our time come? When will men at last be born among us?" With the repetition of this question to the elementary Power of the Black Soil, Uvár, the story dies into silence. This pessimism was unfounded. The Russians, who were to work for the liberation of their own country, not of alien, unknown Bulgaria, were already born; he could have found them even in 1848 round Bêlínsky and Petrashévsky, and in 1862 even among the officers, Potebnyá to wit. In that case, to be sure, he would have had to publish his novel at the London Free Press and under the strictest incognito. He chose an imaginary Bulgarian, a straw mannikin, because with any other—a Pole, for instance, though he was infinitely more likely, or a student of Moscow University—he would have come into conflict with the dragon of the Censorship. How, when he was far away at Paris or Baden, his pessimism—*i.e.*, his mistrust of Russia's strength—constantly increased was sufficiently shown by his pusillanimity in 1876–77.

The breakdown of the "Eve"—only the Radical Dobrolúbov was delighted, because with the novel in his hand he could produce a proof that Russia had no men to-day such as she needed—was to be wiped out by "Fathers and Sons," a work of imperishable beauty, interesting from the first words, with its wonderful taking of us *in medias res*, without long-winded explanations, down to the last pages, the most tragic that he ever wrote, the heartrending death-struggle of his hero and the quiet, resigned despair of his parents, Baucis and Philemon, those simplest of all human beings, compared with

whom the drawing-room lioness Odintsóva and the lion Kirsánov are nothing but puffballs. Above the welter of simple and complicated, good-humoured and tyrannical, weak and strong-willed, sensible and empty-headed figures towers high Bazárov, the one strong man whom he has portrayed in fair detail, the hard and genuine whom you have not to think about but to obey or hate, who will never change his high opinion of himself till he chances upon a man who will not have to make room for him. With conscious deliberation Turgénev has knocked together his hero out of a petty bourgeois. No nobleman would have been capable of such a part; for in him his "bárstvo," his gentility, *i.e.*, the habit of living gratis and *in dulci jubilo* on the proceeds of flaying the serfs, has atrophied all sense of activity, and he now for over a century and a half has lived at other people's expense mentally as well—foreign countries supplied ideas, snippets of knowledge and the like as required—and is so totally estranged from the people that even if he wished to espouse the cause of the peasant the latter would remain to him the "mysterious stranger" inevitable in Mrs. Radcliffe's novels. Again and again Bazárov insists before the young Kirsánov, who looks up to him in boundless admiration, that it is because of his gentility that he must remain a weakling, a man of sugar-candy, who raves about Pushkin, and twangles the guitar, and runs after girls just as his father did. Büchner's pamphlet and those of Voigt and Moleschott make no difference to that.

It is also the only novel in which the women "give the *pas* to" the men. Turgénev elsewhere stands up for the direct opposite. Even his Solómin in "Virgin Soil" he makes say, "All of you, Russian women, are higher and more vigorous than we men." And how high elsewhere his women stand above all the "talented" men—Maria above Verétiev (in "A Backwater"), Marianna above Rúdin, Ásya above her Seladón, Helena above Shúbin and his crew, Liza above Lavrétsky—these women devoid of egotism, whose wings are already grown without their yet knowing whither their flight shall be taken! Those to whom they would fain blindly trust them-

selves know it even much less. Instead of an imaginary foreigner he shows us a real live Russian, a man whose only principle it is to have no principle at all, who denies everything, to whom the whole of Art, Raphael and Pushkin, is not worth a penny, whom only the test of something actual teaches, to whom all abstractions, knowledge and the like, are an abomination, who denies the feeling of Nature (Nature is no temple; it is a workshop)—in a word, a "Nihilist," the first that celebrated his victorious entry into Russian literature. Nay, Turgénev was the first to apply in that sense this name, which was coined long before him for other purposes and, without meaning it, really furnished Reaction with a handle for harrying those known by that name.

"In the dark, seven years' night (1848–55) this style of thought and grasp had developed and grown strong—this logic without cohesion, this knowledge without dogma, this unconditional subservience to experience, this acceptance without grumbling of all consequences. Nihilism does not turn something into nothing; it only shows that 'nothing' taken for 'something' is an optical illusion, that every truth is more wholesome than all fanciful imaginings—Pushkin would have protested against that—and that it is binding on every one. Whoever, on the other hand, understands by Nihilism the transforming of facts and ideas into 'nothing,' into fruitless scepticism, into concerted folding of the hands on the knees, then the Nihilist proper does not belong here, and the greatest Nihilist will be Turgénev himself and his favourite, Schopenhauer" (Herzen). Sure enough Bazárov confesses, "Once, no long while ago, we discussed how our officials are corrupt, that we have no roads, no trade, no proper Courts. At last we recognised that prating, always nothing but prating, of our wounds was not worth while and only led to vapidity and doctrinairism. We realised that even our clever men, the so-called men of Progress, and fault-finders are no good; that we only concern ourselves with fools' tricks, jabber about Art, unconscious creation, Parliamentarism, advocacy, and the deuce knows what all, while it is a question with us of daily bread; we choke in the crudest superstition, our joint-stock companies

burst merely for want of honest men; freedom itself, 'which our Government sees to' (so the Censorship demands), will bring us no profit, because our peasants would most gladly rot themselves in order to be able to sip the poison in the pot-house." Bazárov is not a Nihilist, he is a revolutionary; and Herzen justly called on him to come to London. There was still another way out for him. Knowledge, which even more than the Gospel teaches humility, which knows no *de haut en bas*, despises nothing, never lies for the sake of the past, nor disguises anything out of coquetry, which places us in face of the facts like an inquirer, often like a physician, never like an executioner, still less with enmity and irony: "Knowledge is Love" (Herzen). Turgénev preferred to kill his hero; he was, so to speak, in love with him, and shared all his opinions except as to Art: "Show me a single arrangement in our life of to-day, in family life or in social, which does not tend to call forth unconditional and merciless denial. We pull down, so must first clear the ground." He even kept a private diary in the Bazárov spirit. The latter is the counterfoil to Rúdin, the hero of phrase, but they are contemporaries. There are other points of contact as well between the two novels. Bazárov is loved, or at least respected, by all, even children, though he caresses nobody and is harsh in his bearing. The instinct of strength even for a moment attracts the *blasée* Madame Odintsóv, but their natures are too contrary for the mere charm of novelty to suffice to bridge over the gulf which separates the woman of the world from the plebeian. He allows himself, indeed, to be carried away by his senses; the spring fails, but he is calm. "I have not begun to break down myself, so no woman will break me." Love, indeed, is but an outward sensation; but he is no despiser of good things, he kisses Fénichka directly afterwards—one always gets something. In this liaison with Madame Odintsóv, which, owing to his forcing matters, leads to separation, the human weakness of this super-man are exhibited to us. And on his death-bed, when the malign fever has overcome his powerful organisation, then he, too, becomes for brief periods accessible to emotion, to "Romance the honey," which he otherwise always

rejected as not being calculated to be of any use to him on his bitter, rugged, solitary march through life.

The title was somewhat misleading. It was not a question of any contrast between generations, between fathers and sons. Kirsánov the son is a pendant to Kirsánov the father. This at once divides him for good from Bazárov, the man, not of the new generation which follows purely chronologically upon the older and merely wears different hats and gloves, but one of the new men who at the best have but a pitying shrug of the shoulders for the past and environment. Kirsánov the son has neither impudence nor malice; such as he will not get beyond well-bred humility or well-bred indignation: both are nonsense. "We mean to fight, you call yourselves names; we abuse others and break them, you remain only the delicate, Liberal son of a gentleman." Even the dates were fictitious. It was quite anachronistic. The very newest terms ("Indicter," only after 1856) were used, and Büchner's pamphlet mentioned, as if the events took place in 1861 or 1862.[1] Instead of these allusions some date like 1852 should have been chosen. Quite superfluously that of 1842 was assigned to the "Gentlefolk." There were, even in 1852, Bazárovs in Russia, although he may not have made the acquaintance of such a doctor till much later; the earlier date would have prevented a number of misunderstandings from cropping up. Thus the pursuit of the real avenged itself.

For, be it known, there occurred one of those Russian miracles which are simply incomprehensible to other Europeans. This Bazárov, this hero who moves so high above the surrounding ruck of Kirsánovs and the like, much higher even than Rúdin, say, above those about him, whose opponent, the Tory Kirsánov, is made so unpardonably ridiculous, was taken by the Russian Radicals as an outrage and a libel on themselves, and they have never to this day forgiven the most impressive and only manly figure that Turgénev ever created. While Katkóv, in whose *Messenger* the novel appeared, was complaining of the apotheosis of the Nihilist, the Antonóviches and others cried out that he had bespattered the new genera-

[1] The novel begins in May, 1859.—E. H. M.

tion with muck, maliciously revenged himself on Dobrolúbov for unfavourable criticism (he was, they said, a portrait of Dobrolúbov), and had perpetrated a caricature on the young men of the day. In vain he protested in the name of his "favourite child": "My novel was directed against the nobility as the leading class; æsthetic feeling made me take good representatives of it only to be able to show that if the cream is so weak, washy, and scanty, what must the milk be like? Of Bazárov I intended to make a tragic figure: there floated before me a dark, wild, large figure, half grown out of the soil, a powerful, angry, honest one, and yet condemned to perish, one whose place is only in the antechamber of the Future; if I had included skinflints among the 'Fathers,' it would have been crude and inexact. All genuine recalcitrants" (he avoids here the obnoxious word "Nihilist") "whom I knew—Bêlínsky, Bakúnin, Herzen, Dobrolúbov—came of good and honourable parents; this takes from them every pretext for personal ill-feeling or indignation." The young had expected something else—an ideal figure, a knight *sans peur et sans reproche*, at whose feet, say, the proud, handsome, wealthy Madame Odintsóv, an idly dreamy, coldly curious woman of rank, would at once have fallen, whom the poisoning from the corpses could not have harmed! Thus the "Progressists" were confused by the honest, strictly objective demeanour of the artist, by the truth instead of any imagination. For that matter, it was not at all his way to draw ideal heroes. Even in Rúdin he preferred merely to indicate the true ideal figure, Pokróvsky, *i.e.*, Bêlínsky: "If one once began to speak about him, all desire vanished to speak of any one else. This lofty, pure soul, and its poetry and sincerity, attracted every one; for all his clear, expansive intelligence, he was as gentle as a child, this poor student who painfully eked out a living by lessons."

Thus his popularity received in 1862 a blow from which it never fairly recovered. He had got between hammer and anvil, was regarded by the one party almost as a Nihilist and by the other almost as an informer. The injured man made up his mind to retire into seclusion—*cf.* his "Enough"

("Dovólno"), which bears evidence of the deepest pessimism, to which even old Prince Odóevsky rejoined with a sharp "Not enough." He had often before taken this resolution. In any case he did not improve his position with "Smoke." It weighed, no doubt, on his mind that he had not given vent to his Westernising dislike of all sorts of Chauvinism, that it was only the apish Pánshin that he made preach the catechism of his creed: "Russia must catch up Europe; she has invented nothing herself, not even a mouse-trap, as Khomyakóv himself must allow; she must therefore borrow. We are sick, but only because we have only half become Europeans; we must cure ourselves with a hair of the dog that bit us. All peoples are at bottom alike, let only good institutions be introduced and the thing is done," &c. Now he chose for himself a clever but bitter interlocutor, his Westerniser Potúgin (but Pigásov in "Rúdin" had been far more amusing in his day!), who at most betrays the Russian by the fact that he has the worst possible opinion of himself, which Bazárov had characterised as precisely the advantage of one. And so Potúgin rails at everything Russian, so that Turgénev himself has on one occasion to excuse him on the ground of his being just in his most misanthropical mood, and everything appearing to him in a most hateful light; but the "statesmen" who at Baden-Baden besiege roulette and the cocottes and the students that come over from Heidelberg with their oracle Gubaryóv (meant for Ogaryóv, Herzen's friend, which, of course, is sheer idiocy) and Bambáev, who even gets enthusiastic over Russian geese, pay all honour to Potúgin's outbursts. As the audience at that matinée in the "Demons" neighs with joy that Russia has been dishonoured publicly, so he was now taxed with a similar sentiment, pursued with epigrams, and heaped with reproaches.

He based great hopes on his last novel, "Virgin Soil." But if Chernyshévsky and even Herzen (under the first impression; afterwards he corrected his opinion, but their alienation had another reason) had turned away from Bazarov, those who went among the people, the apostles, recognised themselves still less in Nezhdánov and Solómin. If in

"Fathers and Sons" he had treated the Conservatives, *i.e.*, "our reactionary gang," decently, he now laid on the colours as glaringly as possible. The wife of Sipyágin is a very much degraded Madame Odintsóv, and compared with Kallomêytsev, who only acknowledges the principles "Champagne and the knout," kisses the priest's hand, and calls in the admirable police against freedom of the Press and Zemstvos (local Councils), Paul Kirsánov was a beatific figure. Among the Revolutionaries we find enthusiasm and fanaticism, but no sense; they run blindly on destruction. Mashúrina alone makes a lifelike impression, the others are artificial, none is from life; of course, the inevitable mocker is not wanting. For Pigásov or Potúgin we now have Páklin; in him are pent up all sorts of reflections, imaginations, inventions, laughable or mocking observations like water in the locked mill, and presently the sluices open and nobody and nothing is spared. In the centre stands the pair Nezhdánov and Marianna, who has such a bad time of it with Madame Sipyágin that she elopes with him. The "Morrow" of their flight is a gem of descriptive poetry, but Nezhdánov is here again a "man of the forties," Béltov or Rúdin, who believes in nothing, least of all in himself; the only advance consists in his confessing this to himself, and, therefore, voluntarily taking leave of life in order not to remain a drag-chain to others. Turgénev not only endows him with his own lack of will and weakness, but also with other peculiarities of his own; he put things even in Bazárov's mouth which only he and his hero could think, now he grows even more lavish with such things. And even Marianna we know already; with Rúdin she even bore the same name, while to Insárov she was known as Heléna; she deceived herself as to Nezhdánov, taking him for a genuine man, and soon finds how far he is below her; hence she will without much hesitation give her hand to Solómin over his corpse. For indeed the real hero is Solómin. Turgénev has this time not resisted the temptation of creating an ideal figure, the practical, energetic, stirring Nihilist, sure of his aim, who will not squander his great gifts in brainless undertakings; of course he is a man of the people, as Bazárov was. We

must take his word for it that Solómin is such a Russian wonder of the deep. In the story itself we never see him at any work from which we could judge of his qualities; that he sympathises with the aims of the Nihilists, does not risk his own head, and loves Marianna is all that we are able to determine. A lovely morsel, for instance, is the "Nihilists' Meal at the Merchant Golúshkin's." Most superfluous, on the other hand, remain the two dusty figures out of a museum of the eighteenth century, Fómushka and Fímushka (Thomas and Euthymia), a whim of the author's. We will not insist how strongly the story, and that not at all to its advantage, recalled Chernyshevsky's "What is to be done?" The attempt at all hazards to show himself on a level with the age and all its interests had totally failed. It was no free moulding from the actual and the full, from Nature itself but painful work of the mind after paper models and patterns, doubly surprising in an artist, who, according to his own showing, never could start from an idea, but only from concrete personalities; thus, even in his last short story, "Clara Mílich," the artist herself has been Katerína Milovídov, and the type of Arátov has held its ground in his memory from his youth. The failure of the novel was entire; after it the author went back for good to his short stories and "Prose Poems," of which only a portion was published, while those with personal references were mostly held back. The mastery of his style, the profundity and keenness of his psychological glance, he had preserved, but they made no difference in the mental profile of the artist.

A far greater than he mercilessly ridiculed him in a very ignoble fit of anger; every single feature of the man was seized by him correctly, only distorted beyond all measure, while the real merits of the artist were not mentioned. Nobody like him has reproduced the Russian gentry in their essence, in the influences to which they were exposed in the rapid change of the times, in their good and evil qualities, and not less the background of their life in full and soft pictures, of classical simplicity with the fullest lifelikeness and consummate art; he bore testimony to whole races and conditions

of men. The ideal to which he was never untrue was that of humaneness; he remained a Liberal of the old pattern, of the time before 1848, in the English and dynastic sense, a conscientious opponent of all revolutions, in spite of his temporary adherence to Herzen or the Nihilists. A convinced admirer of Art and of the needfulness of Poetry—hence his admiration of Pushkin—undisturbed by the watchwords of the day, he continued to sacrifice at her altars. As a man (which does not concern us) and as an artist he was not free from certain foibles and prejudices—yet his work is wholesome because highly artistic.

The same men and times, often with the same anachronisms and thus also with similar misunderstandings, were treated of by his elder contemporary Goncharóv.[1] He, too, did not get beyond the forties, except in the case of Volókhov in the "Landslip," where he made a fiasco. Goncharóv, in contrast to Turgénev, came of a well-to-do merchant's family, where a stop had been put to the old prejudices and want of cultivation; but life in the quiet provincial town on the Volga was much as in the country; these wooden houses with their little gardens, surrounded by ditches with thick nettles and wormwood, endless fences, and the stillness of death in the roads, laid out in patterns of dust: you hear it if half a mile away some one drives past, or a pedestrian clatters his boots on the wood pavement with its deficient planks; one felt inclined to sleep one's self when one saw all these sleepy dwellings with the curtains drawn and the sleepy faces at home and out of doors. From this silence, which might vie with that of a manor, the lad was carried to distant countries by the narratives of a former naval officer. His studies at Moscow and his official career cut him loose altogether from his native town. His officialism left "punctuality and moderation," not to say pedantry, clinging to the author and his strictly Conservative ideals. But for the naval officer he would, perhaps, never have been prompted to take the voyage round the world which he made in the frigate *Pallada*, and described in letters, one of the

[1] Goncharóv has not been translated. An extract from Oblomov is in Wiener's "Anthology," ii. 250.

best works of travel in Russian Literature ; the vividness of the painting of the motley Oriental life, especially in Japan before the Reforms, the humour that spices these pictures agreeably, the interesting scenery and human beings, the Russian ways, not varying even in the Tropics, and the lively interest of the narrator in the least thing, even the ship's cats, cooks, and sailors, insure lasting interest to the letters.

In total contrast to the prolific Turgénev, Goncharóv is one of the least productive that ever was. In the course of five-and-forty years of literary activity he only worked out three subjects, which he hit upon between '44 and '49. Length makes up what is lacking in number. An awful letting himself go shows us the unadulterated Russian in exact contrast to the Russian Flaubert, whose triumphs lie precisely in his self-repression. While with the country gentleman Turgénev the town plays no part, Goncharóv transplants his gentry to St. Petersburg, and works out the problem whether the city and the career or the original bent of character will get the upper hand. The "Everyday Story" gives one, "Oblómov" the opposite solution, and the "Landslip," a sort of mixture, *i.e.*, no solution at all. In the "Everyday Story" of the young Adúev, printed in 1847, we make acquaintance with the Romanticist from the provinces, who arrives in St. Petersburg with his head full or poetry, love, and friendship, where his uncle, the elder Adúev, extracts his unsound teeth. The operation is painful, but he bears it well and gets them replaced, and with a faultless set the nephew takes his seat at the rich board of St. Petersburg officialdom, writes, but not poems, loves, and even marries, but after the most careful inquiry as to dowry and connections ; and his programme is—from Councillor of State to become Actual Councillor, and finally Privy Councillor ; in reward for long and efficient services and tireless labour at length to cast anchor in the haven of some permanent Commission or Committee, while retaining his full pension ; and then the ocean of mankind may rage, the century be changed, peoples and States roll into the abyss of Fate, but everything will pass him calmly by till an apoplectic or other seizure stops the course of his

life. The recipe was ever so simple: Doff thy dreamings, Youth, and don thy undress uniform. Wonderful to relate, this calculation of the correct way of life does not quite tally in one point—a trifle, over which the author does not linger, only points it out; it is sufficient, however, to make a hash of the whole reckoning.

The mentor of our Télémaque and director of this *Education Antisentimentale* is, you must know, also married, and very well married. He instructs his nephew how one is to marry, not for love alone, which is fleeting, but with calculation, not *from* calculation; how one must then sedulously school the wife, place her as if in a magic circle, and dominate her will and her spirit without her being conscious of it. The same method was extolled simultaneously by Druzhínin in "Polínka Sachs." What, then, is the result? Somewhat the same as Dostoévsky sets forth as the product of many years' solitary confinement, that sucks the sap out of a man, unnerves his soul, weakens and intimidates it, and produces a morally dried-up mummy, a semi-maniac as a model of reformation and repentance. Thus, approximately, it is with the Privy Councillor's lady, exhausted, indifferent to everything, and, although there is nothing the matter with her, dangerously ill. And this mention, which seems to have slipped out through carelessness, is not accidental—oh dear, no! we shall come across it again directly.

If with Adúev St. Petersburg won a brilliant victory over Oblómovka, it suffered a dreadful defeat with Oblómov. The most wonderful scene in the story had been printed already in 1849, the whole first appeared in 1858 and formed the sensation of the year. That sensation, like the novel itself, was only possible in Russia. To write four volumes full about a hero whose whole heroism consists in lying on a sofa and such absolute idleness that he would rather expose himself to be knocked down by the falling ceiling than escape by changing his quarters; about a hero whom his friend and his sweetheart try to drag from this inactivity, and who in the end secures his continuing to lie undisturbed on the sofa by marrying his admirable, conscientious, anxious housekeeper—this really calls

for skill. Beside the great and sympathetic skill the typicalness of the case—for an Oblómov is latent in every Russian, how overcome him ?—was enough to decide the sensational success. The author lays bare the whole moral structure of his hero, going back to his earliest youth, makes him dream on his sofa the famous "Dream of Oblómovka," the most perfect incarnation of utter vacuity as it creeps forth from all corners and besets men and their doings. In the manor we are in the kingdom of yawns, of inaction and heedlessness such as serfdom made possible, absolute rest and inertness. This is, indeed, disturbed at times by various *contretemps*—sickness, death, work, litigation, &c.; but even these cares are faced with stoical immobility, and they really flit past, after having flapped for a while over folks' heads, as birds past a smooth wall where they find no spot to snuggle against, beat in vain with their wings against the hard, smooth stone, and at last fly farther on.

From such an environment, heir to three hundred and fifty souls somewhere in the vicinity of Asia, Oblómov came to St. Petersburg as Secretary to a Board twelve years before. From the University he had brought with him in his head a confused record of various names, dates, and facts, politico-economical, mathematical, and other problems, assumptions and truths, a library of nothing but single volumes touching various branches of knowledge. He soon sees through the busy pretence of doing at the office, his environment, this work for the sake of working without any higher object, and for it he lacks the power of will which is not to be acquired in Oblómovka. Thus after two years he already quits the service, and soon abandons also his relations with society which do not please him. He now becomes reticent, fearful, and mistrustful, and scents everywhere ambushes, malevolence, and danger ; only he does not dread the consequences of hugging the room, of over-eating himself, of the cracks in the ceiling, yet he still leads the inner life of his humane heart, of his ardent head, of which the outer world naturally sees nothing. In vain does his friend try to drag him from this slough of inactivity in which he sinks deeper daily. This friend, a German-Russian, named Stolz, is a model of practical,

active, excellent sense ; the author could not choose a regular Russian for the part for fear of offending against the fundamental truth of Oblómovka, "They are all the same." Pisarev rightly mocked at this, and put these words in the author's mouth : "You Russians all sleep ; you are so stupefied by sleeping that I had to fetch my active hero from among the Germans, as your forefathers sent for princes from Germany." We are present at the debates of the friends ; only too often we must own Oblómov is right, as when he ridicules sociability : "Then they meet together, and one feeds the other up, without pleasure or mutual inclination, they assemble for their dinners or suppers as if at the office, not caring and cold. What has become of the man here ? where has he hidden himself ? How has he changed himself away for trifles ! They are all asleep, these barterers of news, card-players, place-hunters ; to be sure they do not lie on the sofa meanwhile, but creep round like flies, in workaday barren interchange of their days." Stolz's remark that all this was old does not confute Oblómov in the least ; but just as little do all these truths excuse Russian laziness or Buddhistic navel philosophy.

At length Olga too fails in the attempt finally to extricate Oblómov from the slough from which under her influence (these are the most exquisite descriptions in the whole book) he had half freed himself, and she chooses for herself the representative of knowledge, work, and energy, turning away from the incarnation of sleep, stagnation, and motionless, dead living, the crawling from one day to another—"Farewell, old Oblómovka, thy day is at an end !" Will Olga see her ideals really fulfilled at Stolz's side ? Hints by the author betray the contrary : Dobrolúbov hoped she would desert Stolz as she had Oblómov. Side by side with this master of the "good old times," let not the servant be forgotten either. If Adúev's Yevsêy saw in brightly polished boots the source of the highest earthly pleasure, Oblómov's Zakhár is a complex phenomenon—obstinate, lazy, impudent, self-willed, unclean, but at bottom devoted to his master, the true slave from Oblómovka.

An Oblómov who substitutes for lying on the sofa an equally fruitless activity in many kinds was put before us by Gocharóv in his Ráisky of "The Landslip." The idea of the novel was already forthcoming in 1849, and thoroughly interfered with the completion of Oblómov, but did not appear in a complete form till 1868, when it came much too late, being already an anachronism in a fast-moving society, as it put on the appearance of being contemporary and of taking place in 1868, whereas it bore on its front the marks of the period before 1848. Even this was bound to limit the success of the novel, added to which was intolerable length, a danger from which Oblómov had barely escaped unscathed. The scene is no longer laid in the capital, but among the gentry in the country. His hero is no longer an official but an artist, many-sided, gifted like Herzen's Béltov with imagination, feeling, and understanding, without the qualities needed for strenuous activity, allowing himself to be checked by the technical difficulties, so a man who will nowhere get beyond sheer dilettantism, a "neudáchnik," who succeeds in nothing (from "udácha," success) in Art any more than in life, who tries everything, trains himself, but grasps and holds nothing; who is always accurately and carefully analysing himself, but remains whimsical and weak as a child, without will and without backbone, the typical product, the spoiled gentleman's son of the days of serfdom with seven Sundays to the week. The story originally bore the title "The Artist." And, indeed, Ráisky is so much the principal character that the story might rank as an ego-novel, so carefully are we kept on the alert concerning every impulse and feeling—we recall the words of Shúbin in Turgénev's "On the Eve." Of our Beltov, then, the weakness for the fair sex remains equally characteristic. First he wanted to awaken his cousin, a lady of the world, into human and sentient life. When he gave up this as hopeless he remembered his grandmother and her grand-daughters,[1] who are looking after his property somewhere near Simbirsk: he will now try his arts on Martha and Vêra. The sisters

[1] Though called "bábushka," she is in fact a maiden lady and their great-aunt, though with a past.—Tr.

are the exact opposite to the two sisters Larin in Onêgin, Martha the delight of her grandmother for her tractableness, obligingness, and absence of intelligence, for all her pretty mask. She cannot, of course, hold Ráisky; all the more can the unapproachable, secretive Vêra, who shows herself totally irresponsive to all Ráisky's endeavours, first in the cause of love and then of friendship, so that he gives it up in despair and departs to Italy. This novel also is poor in tangible incidents; especially psychological disquisitions. It is filled out with whole pages of Ráisky. Other characters thus come off rather short—*e.g.*, Vêra who has lost her heart to a Liberal of the pre-Revolution type, out of whom to suit 1868 a "Nihilist" is shaped. Vêra and Volókhov would be far more interesting to us than Ráisky, whom we already know from Herzen and Turgénev, but Goncharóv could as little pass beyond himself as the latter. The "Landslip" ("Obrýv") is not only a locality, it is also a symbol: who will give Vêra his hand to lift her free of the ravine into which, through the error of her senses, she has fallen? Even for the hero of her second romance Ráisky is not suited; one Túshin is called in, a Russian version of Stolz, as steady-going, practical, and solid, good and without any reality and truth. Volókhov, with his preachings of free love and his outbursts against society, at which he is set like his bulldogs at the calves of the police; the others, both men and women—the Grammar School master, something like Herzen's Cruciférsky, and with a touch also of Oblómov as to knowledge, the sentimental coquette and so forth—only form the necessary accessories. Among them all the "bábushka" stands out; at the end of the story she threatens to grow far out of her framework, a symbol of the good old time, its tenacious conservatism which does not ridicule everything sensible, a great heart, and a practical, somewhat despotic disposition, hence also not exempt from pedantry and as superior to the men as Vêra herself. The psychological analyses as well as the pictures of scenery, of village life in a time which vanished for ever after 1861 in spite of all, secure to this over-long novel a power of attraction. But Goncharóv

had already exhausted himself. He only managed thereafter some interesting literary sketches, while his attempt to engraft a genetic cohesion, a logical development, on his three novels (*ex post*) did not succeed. What his master Bêlínsky (of whom he was still to give more interesting reminiscences) had recognised in his first novel, the maintenance of complete objectivity and the absence of any didactic purpose, also characterised those that followed. Herein Goncharóv rubbed shoulders with Turgénev, with whom also he had his subjects in common, although he had not his free, proud manner of seeing, and yet is prone to indulge in generalisations and symbols: the fondness for detail, the most exact execution of the smallest point, was his most distinguishing trait.

CHAPTER XIII

TOLSTÓY [1]

Apparent contradictions and "crises" in his evolution: its directness and logicalness—His work and autobiography—His youthful writings: "War and Peace," "Anna Karénina"—Abandons his purely literary activity—Theological controversy: "Confessions"—Popular literature: "The Power of Darkness"—Separate short stories: The "Kreuzer Sonata," &c.—"Resurrection"—Tolstóy's moral position more important than his "teaching"—The realist and opponent of all mysticism.

In contrast with other Russian writers who hide themselves entirely behind their work—what does one learn about themselves, for instance, from Turgénev or Dostoévsky?—Tolstóy presents an example unique in its kind. From his first to his last work almost everything is autobiography; and without taking account of letters, the accounts of contemporaries, or reminiscences, we are by the author himself most precisely informed of his whole process of evolution; he gives us an account of every idea that ever flashed across his brain, of every change that ever took place in his inner or outer man. His work is the largest autobiography in existence. Tolstóy talks almost exclusively of himself: a couple of sketches and one large novel are the only works in which the master of Yásnaya Polána keeps in the background: Irtényev,

[1] The older translations are superseded for Sevastopol, the plays, and "Resurrection," by that of A. and L. Maude (Grant Richards); "War and Peace" and "A. Karénina," by Miss C. Garnett (Heinemann, 1901–1904). L. Wiener is issuing a translation of all the works (J. M. Dent, 1904).

Nekhlúdov, Olénin, Lévin were consistently himself, until he threw off all concealment whatever and appeared before the reader with his confessions, ideas, and crusade.

People have often spoken of a "change" in Tolstóy: there can hardly be a more consistent, more unvarying, personality, than he, scarcely another man who as he has all his life long held fast to the same ideas. Let one specimen suffice. People are wont to declare of him that, at any rate, he afterwards repudiated his older æsthetic views, to which he himself as a creative artist was once true, and they appeal to his last irritable outbursts on Art. They forget that he defended the thesis in 1862, not only in 1892 or 1902; Pushkin and Beethoven do not please us because there is absolute beauty in them, but because we are as artificial as they, because they flatter equally our senseless irritability and our weakness. And from the same year before he himself became an "exploiter" dates the definition of elegant literature as an artistic exploitation which is profitable only to those who take part in it, not to the nation. Our literature does not engraft itself on our people, but remains, like the telegraph and such things, the monopoly of a certain company of people and its personal benefit.

In spite of this obstinate consistency it would not be difficult to confute Tolstóy from his own writings. No wonder that in his decade-long search after truth he turned off into side paths, lost his way, and at last found himself going right—one is glad to forego such a cheap victory. In return one recognises in him without any reserve the greatest seeker after truth of all ages, one who has not been satisfied with any particular conventional lie. Every man owns one or more stalking horses; with one it is his family, with another his country, with this man knowledge, with that Art, Religion, Society, and the like: he alone spares no article in this masking wardrobe, holds each one up to the cold, bright light of day, and shows off the holes, the threadbare and the faded places, without any consideration, like the true Russian that he is. And so he came before us in 1852 with his first attempt, and such he has remained until the other day, when he was protesting in the

English papers against the war: thus he has remained true to himself.

Pitiless analysis, which dissects every prompting, however good or noble it may seem, to its last fibres, and often instead of a virtue lays bare a moral ulcer, characterises his two first "narratives," "Childhood" and "Boyhood," to which was added after a longish pause "Youth," the experiences of Irtényev from as far back as he can remember down to his leaving the University after his first year and his shameful failure at his examination, which shattered all his illusions, although he comforted himself with the best maxims. Irtényev is Tolstóy, although the particulars purposely by no means tally; for instance, he did not fail in his examination. What is true is just the most honest endeavour to obtain a clear view as to the impressions of his surroundings, his reading, and his first personal experiences. His contemporaries who raved about Romantic heroes like Pechórin or Tamárin, and soon after about the "Indictment" literature, were left cold by this psychology: only one or two Conservative critics drew attention to this quite unique talent. Of course the circle of observation was limited—the nursery and schoolroom, first acquaintances, youthful friendships, the first Communion, and so forth; but even here the author points out unsparingly all that is conventional, untrue, or hypocritical in the life of his class, even here there crops up the first contrast to the views of the people.

Soon Irtényev, though now styled Prince Nekhlúdov, had the opportunity of extending his observations. From the University bench, quite in a humanitarian obfuscation, he hastened to his estate with the firm determination to spread prosperity, blessing, and happiness around him. The beautiful soap-bubbles burst directly! Not only was the hoped-for result not forthcoming, but it turned out that his personal intervention actually brought about the disadvantage of the "favoured."

He was speedily mastered by the feeling of dissatisfaction, disappointment, and weariness. He forgot all at once all his good resolutions, and the "Squire's Morning" resolved itself

into evenings of play in the town and ended wofully. In order to "pull up" "Olénin" proceeded to the Caucasus; he hoped to be born again at once financially and morally. To Olénin the moral, though not the financial, result was just nil, only that literature was enriched by a gem, "The Cossacks," a short story. He comes to know country and people, Cossacks on the Térek as an ethnographic variety, in their conflicts with the "wild" Gortsy (mountaineers), in the rich scenery, especially the trio, the damsel Queen Mariana, with whom he at once falls in love, who seems to dally with him and with an energetic "Get away, you beast!" shatters all his illusions; the *urván dzhigit* (hero) Lukáshka, who prides himself on his strength and bravery, until the Abreks (Ghazis) wound him seriously; lastly, Uncle Yeróshka, who in his declining days is just a hunter. To his intercourse with these people, especially the old hunter, an embodiment of all primitive elements and instincts, simply a wood-demon or satyr, he owes his new conception of life. By his contact with Nature he finds happiness: "Before, when I required and devised so much for myself, I reaped nothing but shame and trouble—how little do I now need for happiness! Happiness is based on living for others. The necessity of happiness is something of a law, every one feels it; but to gratify it selfishly by heaping up means, fame, and the like will not do, if only for this reason, that conditions themselves may be adverse to it, consequently these means of happiness themselves are not a law of Nature—what others can be but love and self-abnegation? I want nothing for myself, why should I not live for others?" At the same time he envies Lukáshka his assured demeanour. But he only repeats himself, for even in the "Squire's Morning" we found the same "Illumination": "Mere folly is everything that I knew, believed, or loved; love and self-denial make the only happiness that is not dependent on chance," and at that time, he envied the young Ilyúshka the same calm and assurance. Nay, even the youthful Irtényev was overcome by the delight and emotion of Christian self-devotion; he had meant speedily to begin a new life as a different man: "To be sure all that remained

of the whole meditation was a mental capacity for extension which paralysed my power of will and the habit of constant moral analysis which destroyed freshness of feeling and clearness of thinking."

Olénin envies not only Lukáshka for his physical, but also old Yeróshka for his moral health. To this Pantheist "it is all the same, God has made everything for the delight of man, there is no sin—as witness the wild beast; that is all a lie: when one dies grass grows over one, that is all." For the time being Olénin gets enough of philosophising and brooding: he goes back into the world, takes service as an officer, and has visions of the St. George's Cross and epaulettes, without suspecting that he is marked out for a general in Literature, not in the Artillery: he laid the foundation for that at Sebastopol. Then he describes what he saw as officer in charge of a battery in sketches (Sebastopol in December 1854, in May, 1855, and in August of the same year—the Assault took place on the 27th) which are meant to give the mere truth. His realism alarms himself: he asks whether he has not talked of what one should keep silence about—for where in this "Narrative" is the expression of the evil that one should flee, or of the good that one should imitate? Who is the hero, who the evil-doer? They are all good, all bad. . . . "The hero of my narrative, whom I love with all the strength of my soul, whom I wished to display in his whole beauty, and who was always fair, is, and will remain so, is the truth." As in the former "Tales" so in these the contrast is repeated between the people—the common soldiers who carry out their hard duty without murmuring, without boasting, and with deliberate and sure calmness, as against the "Intelligentsia," the officers and their posing and theatrical heroism.

In the fearful days of the siege, in the whirl of drawing-room and literary life into which Tolstóy plunged after leaving the Army, even being fain to play the fop in his journeys abroad and the first days at Yásnaya Polána, for a time his ideals narrowed, and his scruples and doubts were allayed for a while. The hero of his novel "Domestic Happiness" (1859) confesses: "I have lived through much and believe I have found

what is needed for happiness—a quiet, lonely life in our village solitude, with the possibility of doing good to people, which is so easy, to which they are not accustomed; then work which seems to bring profit; then rest, Nature, books, Music, and Love; such is the happiness beyond which I never dreamed of going—and to that may be added a family and all that a man may desire." This programme Tolstoy accordingly carried out—married, and had a family, and might exclaim with his Rostóv (in the concluding chapter of "Peace and War"), as he listens to the humanitarian gabble of the Knights of the League of Virtue: "All that is only sentimental rhapsody and nurses' fables; but I must see to it that our children do not have to beg; I must set my affairs in order while I still live—that is all!" And Tolstóy now saw to it that his increasing family should not need to go a-begging: his pen became a vein of gold to him. To be sure the sceptic in him stirred now and again. Thus he wrote from the point of view of a horse the biography of a noble trotter, the moral being: "How senseless is the living and dying of the intellectuals as compared with that of the animal!" Other sketches also, *e.g.*, "Three Deaths," tended to the same. The scruples which assailed him during his educational activity in his village (these were the years of enthusiasm for the enlightenment of the lower orders, Sunday Schools and the like) regarding the purpose and object of Literature we have already set forth: all this did not hinder him from taking part in that Literature. In 1865 he began to publish "War and Peace" in the *Russian Messenger*.

He had been attracted, and is to-day still attracted, by the brightest and most ideal chapter in Russian history—the story of the Decembrists, those large-minded, humane men. Let us recall, for instance, Lérmontov's heartfelt elegy on Odoévsky, on the glorious women that followed their husbands to Siberia, and endeavoured to soften the lot of other exiles as well; they it was who inspired Nekrásov's cycle of song, "Russian Women." The amnesty of Alexander II. had allowed the return of the last survivor: Tolstóy saw her at Moscow, he whom Chaadáev's noteworthy figure had entranced years before.

Thus he began his tale, but at the wrong end and in the wrong strain: telling of the return to Moscow of old Prince Labázov already somewhat childish; of his wife, who had borne misfortune proudly and with dignity; of the affected son, and the natural lively daughter of their insignificant surroundings, &c., all in a slightly ironical tone: hence the subject did not get further. He hit the tone when, instead of the present with its questions and enthusiasm in the years following 1856 he reached back into the distant past, to the roots of Decembrism which are set in the Napoleonic era, and became an epic instead of a satiric writer. Thus he unfolded for us a family chronicle of the Rostóvs, Bolkónskys, and Bezúkhovs in the years 1805–13, concluding with a chapter which, dating some years later, leads us to the threshhold of the movement. Together with the purely artistic element, the novel contained also a didactic and controversial one touching the part played by heroes, and the influence of the individual, such as Napoleon, which to his mind is only fictitious: we leave this out of the count.

The curse of historical novels is that they are unhistorical, that modern and individual sentiment and thought, more or less disguised, is tricked out in chronological, archæological, and ethnographical fripperies. They are most amusing and bearable in the fashion of the elder Dumas and his "Arabian Nights," which despises all history and puts adventures and love-scenes and duels in its place. One of the few successful historical romances of the world's literature is precisely "War and Peace," because it does not profess to be historical. The Napoleons, Alexanders, Kutúzovs, and so forth are only accessories and supernumeraries; the proper heroes are the Rostóvs, of whom history, at least official history, knows nothing: but family history knows them very well; they are in part the nearest relatives of Tolstóy, his father, &c., all people whose pictures, traditions, and way of thinking and speaking were to some extent still familiar to him. It is thus a family chronicle like that of old Aksákov, only more deep-reaching, interwoven with the course of public concerns, which at that time deeply affected every life, not grouped round a

single personality nor extended over decades and generations. Events brought it to pass that the life of certain families in "War and Peace" must grow into an epic because it came in contact with all aspects of the public and popular life: in it Tolstoy unrolled his huge picture.

It lacks only close-linked unity. The most important personages crop up, *e.g.*, Andréy Bolkónsky—one only needs to alter one or two letters in his name as in that of Kurágin and others to get the historical ones—and vanish from it again completely. They die or we lose sight of them, as in real life. Only some few—the Rostóvs, Princess Marie and Pierre Bezúkhov—remain in the centre of the stage. Else it is a colossal picture of the whole of the life of that day in good families, in the country with its splendid *genre* pictures, wolf-hunting, sledge-driving, and coursing; and in the capital, the camp in war time and in the Ministries, in Freemasons' lodges, and in private circles, on the battlefield of Austerlitz or Borodinó, and in the village church. Before our eyes three generations pass, the old in some few representatives even of Catherine's time, the old Voltairian prince, and the most important among them, Kutúzov; the adults, Prince Andréy and his cotemporaries; and the rising one, the young Rostóvs, and Bezúkhov, with whom the tale is most concerned. We accompany them from the nursery and living-rooms through the camp and field to the walls of burning Moscow.

The sureness of his brush, the disconcerting realism—we are in 1864 and Stendhal at most had dared up till then to remain a realist even in the historical episodes of his biographical novel; the mighty epical swing, the author retaining from the epic the device of constantly repeating certain characteristic parts of his personages; the abundance of pictures, the exactness, plasticity, and fulness of colouring in the reproduction of things seen, raise the story to the highest pinnacles ever attained of human endeavour. No one can evade the mighty impression. Into what dithyrambs does not Flaubert burst, for whom the want of correct composition and so many a defect of style in expression, as also the whole theory of narration, ought to have been bound to destroy all enjoyment.

One keeps on admiring in the great massed scenes as in the most restricted single pictures, not only the depicting of the outside, but above all the correct lighting as from within outwards, the explanation and analysis of the most trifling, unnoticeable, but often most characteristic point. But we will emphasise this point still more over the following novel. As compared with the astonishing wealth of portraits of men, a whole gallery of the most varied heads, womankind is represented by only a few, though, indeed, these are masterly. There are no phenomena characteristic of the age among them: this accords with Tolstóy's views as to woman, whom he relegates to the nursery and housekeeping. Bluestockings who go in for politics and writing, masculine women, and heroines are an abomination to him; they simply do not exist for him. The only total misrepresentation is Napoleon, but this discrowning of the hero was deliberate, admittedly quite unsatisfying and commonplace.

Accordingly, "War and Peace" is not the epic of Russia in 1805–12, but of the aristocratic Russia of that day. Contact with the people was, however, not to be avoided. Nay, Tolstóy sought deliberately to bring it about. He was not concerned, like Dumas, merely to amuse the public: his doubts and scruples did not relax; he was inquiring even here into the meaning of life, and which were nearer to it, the intellectuals or the people. Hence his two heroes, Andréy and afterwards Pierre, undergo a clearing of their conceptions of life. The all-devouring ambition of Andréy is put an end to by his severe wounds, and he realises the vanity of life on his death-bed: we have the marvellous details of his demeanour and his abrupt *volte face* as the shades of death sink over him. Pierre is a somewhat clumsy and apathetic nature, a dreamer whom the mere outward semblance may allure for a moment, as in the case of his first marriage, but cannot satisfy, and whom accordingly everything disappoints, even the Freemasons, who gropes in the dark, till, as a prisoner of the French, the would-be murderer of the Emperor is thrown by chance with another prisoner from among the people, the good-humoured Karatáev. Always till then the author had placed the primitive instinctive

life of the people above the harassed, cultivated, reasoning life of the intellectuals; in his "Kholstomêr" even the gelding had a more reasonable conception of the world than the men—and remained true to himself even in it. The proper heroes are not the official ones, but are to be sought among the men serving that exposed battery of Captain Túshin's. The true meaning of life is known to the embodiment of national wisdom, always talking in proverbs, Karatáev, who theoretically and practically instils into Pierre the doctrine of self-abasement, of sacrifice, humility, and gratitude to the Creator, and of imperturbability, to whom Pierre owes so much. But in spite of the total inward transformation that takes place in him, Pierre does not abandon his wonted life. In any case we have advanced a considerable step. With Olénin to all the wisdom which he acquired in intercourse with Yeróshka and Nature, applied the saying, "Out of sight, out of mind!" Karatáev is shot, Pierre marries for the second time, and finds his happiness in his family. But for how long? When will Karatáev's seed sprout and spring up in him? How soon will he, to whom the good fairy refused no wish, find his prosperous and merry life so unprofitably empty that he will avoid the sight of his guns and the clothes'-hooks in order not to meditate suicide? The succeeding novel tells us.

In "War and Peace" his people, indeed, had been depicted, but not so much so himself; "Anna Karénina," on the other hand, which also appeared in the *Russian Messenger*, 1875–6, is an autobiographical novel. Lévin is Tolstóy, his brother Nicholas, and his death, which affects him so terribly—all is true, only that the minor circumstances are again altered. Nicholas died indeed in Leo's arms, but the latter was single at the time. Even to his wife to be he confessed his love with the same play as Lévin did to his. The composition is here still looser than in "War and Peace." Two pairs of lovers, representatives of lawful and adulterous love, run side by side through the book, and quite apart from the thread of it takes place the "illumination" of Lévin. The title and motto of the work do not fit it justly, for it is not the punishment of adultery—"Vengeance is Mine, I will repay"—but the

Christianising of Lévin that forms its main subject. The brilliant officer and gentleman rider Vrónsky turns the head of the fair Madame Karénin, whom her correct but cold spouse, a high official, cannot in the long run impress. She follows the imperious, irresistible dictate of her heart, and snaps the bonds of morality and respect. In the long run Vrónsky grows tired of the ambiguous situation and her jealousy; he cools down visibly, and she, to whom this love is everything, goes voluntarily to her death. Against this seemingly great happiness, which in reality is only a great unhappiness, is set the lawful love of Lévin, which leads to marriage. Certain pictures here again are among the best, not only in Russian but in all literature: their animation constitutes their principal charm. Any one has only to compare the picture of the races in Zola's "Nana" and in Tolstóy to do justice to the colossal preponderance of the Russian. Zola gives a photograph, the external scene, like any reporter you please, at a halfpenny or a penny a line. Tolstóy-Vrónsky rides the race himself, reproduces the sensations of the rider; even the horse is animated, as in the scene of its breakdown. The mowing competition, the fowl-hunt, and so forth—the Frenchman would take it all in neatly and exactly with his camera, and make us gape at his show, indifferent and bored. Tolstóy makes us actually share the gradual weariness of the arms, the restless seeking of the dog. This aristocratic life at home, *i.e.*, in the nests of the gentlefolk and in the capital, is reproduced with such fulness, freshness, and epic attention to detail as we miss even with Turgénev.

We will, however, turn from the love story or stories; yet, another story of adultery is presented to us, which is very leniently dealt with, evidently from the point of view of masculine morality—men may sin as much as they please, but woe to the woman if she goes astray! We are interested by Lévin, whose regeneration was to announce the death of the artist. Lévin leads the happiest life, but he is gnawed like the fourteen-year old Irtényev—the years have not changed him and he will remain so till his life's end—by the worm of analysis. He asks everywhere about the proper,

the direct purpose, hence the formalism of the office is hateful to him, indifferent the combined activity in the Zémstvo, that playing at Parliament for which he is neither young nor old enough. As little is he an idle admirer of country life or a friend of the peasant, as a sort of lover of disputation for the sake of getting the better of others' opinions. He cannot become enthusiastic over others' watchwords, not even for the Servian War; he protests against the preaching of murder; eight years later he will even write of the "*grossière imposture, appelée patriotisme et amour de la patrie*," and leaves the sole responsibility for it to the Government, on the ground of the notorious fable of the Varangs (Varyágs). Thus he saves himself all the disappointments, insincerities, and dallyings which so strike him in the serious professors, national economists, Slavophiles, and Westernisers. Thus he creates for himself a position which he considers unassailable on all sides.

His happiness, based on himself and his neighbour, is not to be shaken. But when, overtaken with his belongings by the storm in the wood, he reflects that a flash of lightning might decide his whole future, that thus the most senseless, most incalculable chance is sovereign lord over his so-called firmly-based happiness, he feels as if he were going mad. Even when his first son is born to him he experiences, instead of joy, the feeling of having exposed to Fate or Chance a new and vulnerable portion of himself. Herzen had felt the same and expressed it long before him. Thus Death upsets all his calculations, and the feeling strengthens after he has seen his brother die and the change into nothingness set in. This dread of inadvertible death, which renders all earthly endeavour useless, cannot be conquered for him by the scientific terms which have long since taken the place of all definite belief. Renewed reading of philosophical works lays bare to him this playing with expressions which is only effectual as long as it combats the views of others, but is not calculated to give anything definite, and if once the gleam of an understanding has dawned it cannot be held fast or replaced at pleasure. He reads Khomyakóv's theological writings, but it is only for a minute that he is reassured by his definition of the Church as

the living fellowship of believers, so that only humanity united in love, not every single man, attains to the Divine truth. His doubts become a torture: "Unless I know why I am here and what I am, I cannot live. The whole result of centuries of labour of the human mind is, that in the endlessness of space, time, and matter, an organic bubble separates itself off, maintains itself for a brief span, and bursts—that is I." Assuredly only coarse scorn of a hostile Power. However, he finds intervals of rest when he regularly lulls to sleep this worm by mechanical work. He is conscious meanwhile in his soul of the presence of a regular Judge, who constantly points out to him the right way; only if he thinks over it, life had no sort of meaning. Nay, his wife, the old stewardess, the people, they know what life and death means, and he notices that religion is not done with after all. His scientificness seems to him as if during a frost he had exchanged a warm fur for a suit of silk in which he now stood there as good as naked and must freeze to death. During a conversation with a peasant a new light dawns on him. The peasant spoke of various sorts of men. One lives only for his necessities, merely fills his belly, but Phokánych is a righteous old man; he lives for his soul, and thinks of God. That saying about thinking of one's own soul had been thrown out much earlier by the stewardess: then Lévin did not take it up, but he does now. "How do you mean he thinks of God, how that he lives for his soul?" almost screamed Levin. It is clear enough how, according to Truth, according to God's way. The words dart through Lévin like an electric spark, his thoughts concentrate: Reason teaches us to live for our bellies, but the knowledge of good that lives in me and in all men stands outside reason and causation. If hitherto I looked upon life as a mere metabolism, an evolution as if such were conceivable in infinity, and if I could, in spite of the greatest exertion of thought, find no meaning to life, or my desires and impulses, in spite of its being so clear in me, because I always lived by it, now I have freed myself from deception, recognised the master of the house, the knowledge of good and evil, which I had imbibed with life itself; not to content oneself with that

is pride, stupidity, fraud, deception of the understanding. Every philosopher has the knowledge of life even as peasant Theodore, and is only striving to return by a doubtful path of reason to what is known to all. Mentally we only destroy, go dancing upon the ice. Without the conception of God the Creator, of the good, what should we be about with our desires, passions, and ideas? Now with my mind, with the heart and the belief in what the Church professes, I know it. The "Love thy neighbour!" I gladly accepted in my childhood, because it was the dictate of my soul, although it is not intelligible. To arrive at this state there is no necessity to pass through the whole process of thought. The thought can hardly follow the feeling of joy and reassurance. One other question imposed itself: If the chief argument for the existence of God is the revelation of good, why should the same be limited to Christianity? Yet this question is wrongly put. To me personally, to my heart, this knowledge has been revealed. This new feeling has not altered, made happy, enlightened, or surprised me, any more than has the feeling of love for my son. I shall continue my accustomed life, but now it will to the end remain independent of all that may happen to me; every minute will not only not be meaningless as it was before, but it has an indubitable sense of good which I have the power to embody in it.

In contradistinction to this reward of moral striving—in which, *n.b.*, one is exposed to no temptation, so unlike poor Anna Karénina—stands the chastisement of the understanding. This deceiver and tempter whispers to the unfortunate woman that understanding was given to man that he might free himself from what alarmed him. Why should one not extinguish the candle, if there is nothing more or only what is unlovely to see, since it is all untruth, deception, lies, and wickedness? And the light by which she read her book filled with fear, deceit, pain, and wickedness, flamed up with a glow that was more glaring than ever, lit up for her all that was dark before, crackled up, began to grow dim, and was extinguished for ever.

This struggle against materialism, this championship of morality, religion, and the Church, were not to be the end of it. Lévin was deceived above all in the Church, and in the same headlong pursuit of Truth soon confessed his error, though no longer in artistic portraiture but in scientific and polemical writings, "confessions" and the like, which now followed each other in alarmingly rapid succession. Let us pluck one out of this abundance, "Ma Réligion" (Paris, 1885). When after overcoming his materialism he turned to the Church, he soon found that the essence of Christianity, Charity, Humility, Self-sacrifice, the repaying of evil with good, had become a mere incident in it; ere long he was repelled by its Intolerance, the strangeness of its dogmas, the roughness, childishness, and obsoleteness of its ceremonies.

The great sorcerer Dostoévsky had immediately upon the appearance of the concluding part of "Anna Karénina" foreseen and lamented the coming conversion, the defection from the solely-redeeming national Orthodoxy, and had realised that immediately, in spite of the supposed reassurance of Lévin, a hitch would arise, over which the whole "reassurance" was bound to come to grief. Coupled with this, he gave the wonderfully lifelike portrait of Tolstóy—as long ago as 1877, to which in 1905 there was nothing to add: "In spite of his colossal artistic talent Tolstóy is one of those Russian minds which only see that which is right before their eyes, and therefore press towards that point. Obviously they have not the power of turning their necks right or left to see what lies to one side; they would have to make the turn with their whole bodies. Then they will perhaps maintain the direct opposite; for in any case they are strictly honest." And Merezhkóvsky further cites his words: "The simplicity" (of Tolstóy and many Russians) "is straightforward, and moreover arrogant; an enemy to analysis; it often ends with their no longer beginning to grasp the object in their simplicity. Nay, they even no longer see it, so that the opposite now comes about, viz., that their own point of view from being simple (and natural)

becomes of itself and involuntarily a fantastic one." Herein lies the evolution of the Quaker, of the rationalist, of the denier of all religion, who cannot even speak of God as "He" but as "It."

For the present to be sure the Gospel itself attracted him, especially the Sermon on the Mount, from which most sectaries start; he realised from it how in contrast to it our whole social organisation rests on the principle of "An eye for an eye," how Divine and human law stand opposed, how the practical inapplicability of the teaching of Christ becomes a principle; how we style nothingness, hollow idols, in order to rescue them from the tale of more errors, the Church, the State, culture, knowledge, art, or civilisation. Now he plunged into the study of the Gospel text and the earliest Fathers, and found that from the fifth century on the words "Judge not, that ye be not judged" had been applied falsely to mere gossip in fault-finding—he had once understood them so—whereas they were meant for the Courts and Judges of the State; found that the superstition of a personal resurrection of Christ was unknown, merely a survival of heathenism, a vague confusion of sleep and death; that Christ opposes to individual life no other life beyond the grave but the common life of mankind which is fused with the present, the past, and the future. He enters into the most complex questions of text, sets aside ever so old wrong translations, interpretations, and readings; loses himself in the coarsest rationalistic platitudes, such as the explanation of the feeding of the Five Thousand: those that had provisions with them offered them to the rest, following the example of Jesus and the Apostles. "There I like the preacher better who reads 'hundreds' instead of 'thousands' and would not rectify this; my peasants will not believe even that; why, each of them eats seven loaves to himself." And thus he realised that of the teaching of the Church nothing remains intact. The life that it enjoins is a wholly chimerical one, such as has never been lived, because with its strugglings and sufferings it is represented as something temporary and contrary to Nature,

incurred by an imaginary Fall, whereas it is really only a conflict between animal and reasoning instincts. To every unprejudiced man the teaching of the Church such as it has been taught in the pseudo-Christian religion for 1,500 years is madness (*démence*). Christ's teaching consists of a moral and a metaphysical portion. As in other religions, in time there takes place the abandonment of the moral and replacement of it by sheer ceremonies and the development of the metaphysical. The arbitrary severance of morality and metaphysics was begun by the heathen Paul, to whom the ethical sense was little familiar, and it was completed under Constantine, when people believed they could cover every heathen institution with the Christian cloak. After having without the aid of the Church got rid of slavery and the absolutism of the Emperor and the Pope, we are now proceeding to do away with the other injustices, property and the State. Every one has deserted the Church, and is independent of her. She has become superfluous like the umbilical cord, for unconscious must be followed by conscious nutrition, the deliberate recognising of the truth of Christ's teaching. My piece of bread only belongs to me when I know that every one has his own, that no one suffers for it when I am eating. He who will keep his life loses it in his egotism. True life augments the goods collected by past generations when one forbears to do his own will and follows God's will. Thus my life and my death will subserve the weal of all. *Obéir à la raison pour réaliser le bien* is the essence of this teaching; dogmas—the Fall, Redemption, and the rest—have only corrupted our conception and caused ethics to disappear from pseudo-Christianity. Belief rests on the perfect consciousness of the true meaning of life, is knowledge of the truth but of no system. The question what one must do to believe only proves that one has not understood the teaching of Christ. Without that teaching and the Church which has exploited the same should be nearer to-day to the ideal of Christ. The confessor of that ideal has to leave the world: for it is just living according to the world which demands the great sacrifices and pains, robs us of

the true conditions of happiness, severs our bonds with Nature, kills the delight in useful work, checks free intercourse with our fellows, undermines our health, and brings early disease and death. Our civilised world has no clearly formulated moral principle of Life; it knows only subjection *aux pouvoirs établis;* but the Church—*i.e.*, the union of men who are not united by formulas and anointings with oil, but by deeds of sincerity and love—has always lived and will always live, be its number great or small; it constitutes the invincible Church in which all men will unite: "Fear not, little flock, for it has pleased your Father to give you the kingdom." The Nihilists are the only true Christians, the best of our time, even though they do not know Christ and often hate him; they alone have faith and lead *une vie raisonnée.*

"Such language speaks for itself: it comes from a deep, religious temperament, and urges us towards all Truth, the high, the noble, and the Godlike, as it disgusts us with the base and the common. The religious element has here with the freedom of the ethical standpoint forced its way through to a harmonious accord. Christianity has here become an ethical religion and passes over to the profession of the absolute and ethical religion." So says a German theologian, although not about Tolstóy, but about the American Unitarian Th. Parker ("A Discourse of Matters pertaining to Religion," London, 1846). It was only to the Russians that Tolstoy offered something new. The Polish Arians, for instance, the precursors of these Unitarians, even used the very same quotations from Origen to Celsus, to say nothing of the Sermon on the Mount; they taught non-resistance to injury in the same way as Tolstóy: "My fellow-men must do good to me; all the evil that they might do to me would set evil against themselves, and if they do it to me because they do not know the truth, I cannot show them the same if I myself am participator in the evil; I must proclaim it through my actions." They declare in the same way that Christ did not expressly forbid war, because he simply could not imagine the possibility of such murdering among people of His creed; they point out the Paradise there would be if

society would follow the law of Christ, and protest against the assertion of the hardness of this law, this yoke which at bottom is easy. Only in Russia did these primeval "doctrines" achieve a sensation and convert men to attempt at living together on "Tolstoyan principles" which led to nothing but gained him the reputation of a prophet.

Yet even at this stage the Nihilist, atheist, and anarchist Lévin did not pause; he who once so violently and so partially advocated Art for Art's sake that old Khomyakóv thought it necessary to set him right at his formal reception as Member of the Moscow Society now entered the lists against Art, against the cult of beauty, against all idealisation of sensual love. He became a vegetarian, because even the killing of animals, which he had always rated highly (*cf.* his "Kholstomêr" of the year 1861), was held by him to be tabooed; attacked alcohol and tobacco as means for befogging the senses and deadening our sense of justice; declaimed against all mental activity as a mere soap-bubble, or something only meant to subserve the establishment of a caste in its convenient way of life—except where it is animated by the real fire. In a word, to him everything made to a pattern and purely in accordance with reason, even in the exercise of charity, is hateful and is accounted by him unprofitable. But the delineation of these deductions lies outside the scope of this work.

We are less interested by this doctrine and its consequences than by the fact that for the first time in Russia a moral authority was able to arise and hold its ground wholly without, and indeed in opposition to, both State and Church. Though the Orthodox and the Conservatives might gnash their teeth with fury at the mere mention of his name, they did not dare to touch Tolstóy. The Plehves and other terrorists, who for nothing and less than nothing, often by sheer mistake, incarcerated thousands and made them wretched for ever, let alone the man who was a thousand times more guilty, out of dread of Europe—nay, of Russia. On this one occasion that favourite little word of theirs, the "Phewt,"[1]

[1] Exclamation = "Away with him!"—Ed.

stuck in their throats; they could exclude him from the Church or stop the printing of his missives, but they have not been able to lay hands on him. The first instance of such a moral authority and quantity in Russia; that is why it impressed us so exceptionally—as a sign of the times.

But in other aspects also the case is instructive—in the first place as concerning the shortsightedness of men. We say nothing here of the attacks of Progressivist criticism on the "pernicious" author of "War and Peace" or "Anna Karénina." But when Turgénev, who yet had done the most for the introduction of Tolstóy into France, who even in the early days recognised and appreciated Tolstóy's greatness—he wrote even in 1856 of him: "When this new wine has ceased to ferment it will be a drink for the gods"—could complain of "Anna Karénina" that she "smells of Moscow, incense, old maidism, Slavophilism, and aristocratic *régime*," it was not Tolstóy but Turgénev who *a fait fausse route*. Others might have complained with more show of justice that in the long run Tolstóy, perhaps even worse than Pushkin once did, had disappointed them. When they expected of the great poet the upbearing of the protest, he had long since made his compact with Reaction; a similar compromise was concluded by Tolstóy with life. Even his Bezúkhov had threatened to divide his income among the poor, though Maria Rostóv opposed the very idea, reminding him of the children whom one might not rob. Years later the same thing happened again. Tolstóy was prepared to carry out Bezúkhov's idea and to go a-begging, but his wife resisted it: "Would I not go with him if I had not small children! But he has forgotten everything over his doctrines." She was prepared to demand legal tutelage of their fortune. It did not in the remotest way come to such an extreme. Like Pushkin, only with less compulsion, Tolstóy by a reasonable compromise avoided unpleasant consequences.

Another circumstance was of importance to Literature. The last words that Turgénev addressed to an outsider were contained in a letter to Tolstóy of July 28, 1883; on

August 22nd he died. They had known each other from an early age, but were never able to be lastingly friendly; Turgénev complained of the "unfreedom" of his disposition, which always somewhat repelled him. Now he admits how glad he was that he was his contemporary and utters a last sincere entreaty: "Go you back to your literary activity; that gift of yours comes from the same quarter as everything else does. How happy I should be if I could think that my request would influence you! My friend, great writer of our country, pay heed to my entreaty! I can no more—am tired!"

It might seem that Tolstóy was to take leave of Literature for ever after "Anna Karénina." He now wrote exceptionally much, but only theological and polemical matter—Confessions and works for the people. He had given up novels. Works for the people—he had even during his educational activity at Yásnaya Polána, 1860–62, complained of the total lack of a popular literature; now he sought for something to work up in legends and popular fables, and subjects of his own in the strain of his teachings as to God's providence; of simplicity of the heart; how the three old men learn the Lord's Prayer in vain; of non-interference with others; of not doing evil; the accidental death of the wicked steward, whom they were intending to murder. These moral and didactic tales lay claim to no artistic value. Their simple, natural diction is their greatest ornament, though the simplicity seems in places forced. They are entirely overtopped and crushed to death by the peasant drama "The Power of Darkness; or, One Claw stuck, so the whole Bird must come to Grief" (1886), one of the most important peasant dramas, not merely of Russian but of all literature, leaving Písemsky and Potêkhin far behind it. It is built up on the contrast, familiar to us from "Anna Karénina," between the "cheat, nay rascal, Reason," who teaches us to think of one's own advantage, and the Heart, or the instinct and need of the good, the ready-tongued Matryóna, who knows all the seventy-seven tricks, who in falling from the stove thinks over seventy-seven ideas, holds high the banner of "Ûm" (Reason). She

weighs and thinks over everything. If there is no other way, a sin, a crime, even though one commits it very unwillingly, must help matters out. Only cover everything up nicely so that no traces remain and our happiness is secured. Akím can characteristically not even speak, stammers and drags his words, and constantly intrudes his "táe," to the greatest vexation and impatience of Matryóna. He contents himself with generalities, repeats immemorial maxims and proverbs, and regularly goes round in a circle with his repetitions. "You turn it your way to make it right for yourself, but God, I mean tae, will turn it His way. . . . You set it, I mean, right for yourself, and about God, tae, you forget altogether."[1]

The combinations, so carefully built up by the "cheat" understanding, will not hold their ground before the voice of feeling, of the guilt-laden heart; and Matryóna, when horrified at the confession of her son, cries in vain: "Children, take him out; he has gone mad!" Language, views, action—everything makes the strangest impression. Even in the variants to the separate scenes one finds pregnant judgments—*e.g.*, the words of the soldier as to the "stupidest lot, the women, that flock without a shepherd, that at best is taught by the drunken peasant with a rope, who only creep about like moles or blind puppies, and poke their heads into the dungheap. Who will have to pay the shot for such?"

Even the intellectuals were not forgotten. We may leave out of the count the comedy "The Fruits of Enlightenment," which can sustain no sort of comparison with the tragic depth of "The Power of Darkness." Tolstóy laughs as usual at the "*intelligentsia*" and its idle, aimless, senseless life. One notices always that its morality is that of the *demi-monde*, on which it looks down so contemptuously; its culture is just as purposeless, running after every charlatanry, in this instance mediums, trances, and hypnotisers—a stupid peasant girl makes fools of professors. The hate of Tolstóy for all mysticism, everything transcendental and metaphysical, here breaks through,

[1] Akím puts in the meaningless syllables *tae* and also "I mean" at every other word.

but the spiritualist in "Anna Karénina" was infinitely more interesting, thought out, and deep than all these hollow-pates, with their half knowledge. Subject as well as form can only claim moderate interest. Not so the contemporaneous stories, "The Kreuzer Sonata" (1889), "The Death of Iván Ilyich" (1884), "Master and Man," and so forth. Where the intellectuals are in question their pack of formulas, their mechanical etiquette, their hollowness, are bitingly commented on, notably in "The Kreuzer Sonata," the bringing up of children not as human beings, but as breeding animals, the training of daughters in catching boobies, and unfaithfulness in marriage. On the other hand, he takes up the cudgels for sexual abstinence and the carrying out of the Christian ideal, instead of setting it aside by pointing to its alleged impracticability. "The Death of Iván Ilyich" shows the worthy close of a soulless but very honourable and intellectual life, with realistic details which are in the highest degree shocking. Only the redemption and conversion of Iván through his humility, under the calming influence of his surroundings—*i.e.*, low-class servants from the people, and not his wife and children—is carried out in a way that will not quite hold water. Here throughout you notice, as in all his works since 1876, the most obtrusive purpose.

This is noticed most of all in the longest of these later novels, "Resurrection." To begin with, in it Prince Nekhlúdov is a Tolstóyan make-believe without blood or life. The same defect detracted but little from the value of "War and Peace," where the one quite unhistorical personage is precisely the principal character, Pierre Bezúkhov. But the gifted artist succeeded in inspiring the semblance of life into that puppet. It did not move like an automaton, but made as if it thought independently, whereas with Nekhlúdov even the appearance is neglected. The entanglement and its unravelling has a dreadfully tortured effect. All truth is sacrificed to theory or idea, as in "Dead Souls." As in "Crime and Punishment," the prospect of a continuation opens before us. Let us hope it will not be fulfilled. As Mariana dismisses Olénin in the "Cossacks," here too Máslova sends off

Nekhlúdov with the same "Uydí" ("Go away"), only that here the latter tries, in the name of an abstract obligation in which he himself only believes *pro formâ*, to carry his point forcibly. The details betray the master, as usual—the scenes in the prison, with the lice and other insects and stench and disgust; the march of the prisoners, wholly disused to air and light, in the sultriness of the July day and its heat-strokes. But one would have to count up chapter on chapter, all the affecting and infuriating scenes, the terrible vividness, the merciless realism, the scenes on the transport—*e.g.*, that evening among the political criminals. And once again the pitiless satire on the intellectuals, on the hypocrisy, indifference, the formality and mechanicalness, the callous egotism, the lack of thought and feeling. The scenes in Court, at the office, or in the drawing-room show us nothing of the true, Christian, and humane people whom yet we have found in the dens of the prison under the crust of physical and moral filth. But the title of the work is quite misleading. There can be no question of a "Resurrection." Nekhlúdov remains what he was. He is devoid of all faith, like Tolstóy himself. Mechanically he repeats the words of the stupid English missionary, which the convicts receive with mocking contempt: mechanically his eyes hasten over the lines of Matt. xviii. Just as Dostoëvsky took "*fausse route*" when he failed to dismiss his Raskolnikov with the words, "In one thing alone did he recognise his crime, that he had been unable to bear it, and given himself up," but hung on to it a goody-goody wishwash about "resurrection through love," &c., so Tolstóy only ridicules himself and his reader when he does not conclude his work with the expression of the feeling of disgust which overpowers Nekhlúdov after the last decisive conversation with Máslova, but by means of a *deus ex machinâ* performs a miraculous cure on the incurable.

Before this Tolstóy had also published a work, "What Is Art?" (1897) of course not a treatise of æsthetics, but a polemic against all æsthetics, demanding only direct advantage of Art, and that just for the training of the eye of

the people or the young, quite partial, but very characteristic, and in detail not devoid of keen and pertinent observations.

Tolstóy is one of the "*littérateurs* of the forties" by his choice of types and subjects, which, like those of Turgénev or Goncharóv, are drawn from the life of the Russian country gentry. Towns and the people, save for isolated attempts like that bird of ill-omen, "Políkushka," are left on one side. His epical skill, his miniature painting and psychology, are theirs, yet what predominates in him is sheer interest in men. Nature as such does not captivate him. *Per contra*, his analysis pierces far deeper. In his unrelenting love of truth he examines and inquires fully into even the noblest phrase, feeling, or action ; even his young Irtényev, whom he praises for his sincerity, declares, "not without internal self-satisfaction" ; "I always say frankly out the things which I must be ashamed to confess." And that Tolstóy has always done ; hence the logical evolution without a single leap—and that folks call turning-point or crisis!—even to the total denying of intelligent and social life and its principles, or, more properly, the want of them, and the unveiling of all that is false and conventional ; even to a protest against the evil practice of celebrating festivities and jubilees of mental labour and enlightenment with heavy eating and drinking, like the holidays of rude peasants. It is just this consistency—others may call it prejudice or mulishness—that most impresses the Russian, whose strong point is never decision. This fearlessness, this refusal to recognise any barriers such as make the Western instinctively pull up, is, on the other hand, as we have set forth in Herzen's words, deeply rooted in the Russian nature.

Hence it is that Tolstóy so wholly reproduces Russian characteristics and is the type of the Russian even to the stalwart figure and peasant's face which vexed him so in his youth and by which to-day he sets so much store, since he is confused by strangers with peasants : "Aristocrat is not necessarily written on a man's face," he declares complacently. Tolstoy is physical and moral health incarnate, the man not less than

his art, the poet of earthly life alone, a mighty gnarled oak, firmly rooted in native soil, broadly and majestically overarching it—without the tendency upwards, towards the supernatural, which is totally alien to him, in which lies his limitation. But within these limits he is the sovereign unsurpassed artist, a Proteus who can not only transform himself into the most widely different human beings but even into animals and plants, who knows how they live and die, what men in their most secret parts desire or feel, and what they outwardly do and say. His sincerity lays bare to him the hollow lies of cultivated life; hence he has been fighting against them from his earliest writings; hence the satirical, ironic touch even in his painting of Irtényev and his lordly caprice, as his coachman aptly describes it, though not exactly in those words. The pursuit of this "*bárskaya blazh*" in all its forms and wrappings is the object of five and fifty years of literary labour, and every year—with short intervals, especially in "Family Happiness," with its preaching of "honourable enjoyment of life," just like the plebeian Mólotov in Pomyalóvsky's "Bourgeois Happiness"—the irony goes on rising till it reaches inexorableness, up to the degree where, not only *quâ* artist but *quâ* man, he seeks to sever every link with this "happiness" as being sinful and senseless.

The astonishing amplitude and exactness of his observations as also his fanatic love of truth, the aptness of his plastic, sensuous, and picturesque diction as well as the deep penetration of his psychical analyses of the normal man, account for the exceptional significance of his work, extending far beyond Russia, and make of him one of the greatest epic poets of all times.

CHAPTER XIV

DOSTOÉVSKY

The Mystic and Prophet in contrast to the great Realists—His first productions give no promise of the future development—Alteration in his tendency after the "Dead House" and especially since "Crime and Punishment"—"The Idiot"—"The Devils"—"The Brothers Karamazov"—His peculiar note and significance: the disturbing quality of his productions; his Orthodox bias.

QUITE in contrast to all other Russian men of letters, who always depict the wholesome and normal being, however much he may suffer from discontent, disappointment, or injustices, and however much he may be already disposed or have been brought to burrowing, playing the Hamlet and doubting, or have now been driven to the same, Dostoévsky is the poet of the sick, not normal, man, for ever removed from physical, moral, and mental balance. The sensations, the glimpse of fathomless depths, of the bright sides of the human spirit, of its unknown and uncontrollable activity, of moral aberrations and perverse impulses—for these we are not indebted to our decadents, Satanists and Orgiasts in the first place: he long since anticipated them. Nothing more characterises the author than his position as regards the Frenchmen Flaubert and Bourget: where the art of the two ceases his first begins. Thus he writes a continuation to "Madame Bovary": how, when the chemist extracts from the papers left by his wife that his much-loved child, who alone consoles him for the loss of his wife, is not his but another's, hatred against the child develops in the man

who has been so shamefully deceived; and the thirst for vengeance in the calm, quiet, cowardly bourgeois and master him and will become a monomania, and will drive him to seek the acquaintance of the other man.[1] Let any one compare "Le Disciple" with "Crime and Punishment"; how the Frenchman lags behind the Russian! Yet the former was written twenty years later and Bourget was proclaimed a "psychologist."

What external circumstances contributed to make of Dostoévsky the painter of abnormal men, of criminals and mad men, epileptics and neurasthenics, degenerates and mystics, dreamers and sceptics, all the disinherited and outcasts, is well known. To begin with he had a sickly constitution, so that his shattered nerves and his attacks of epilepsy were not the result of the convict prison, but he had them when he went there. His great religiousness is also that of the epileptic; in the end it triumphed over all doubts and scruples, and so made him unjust to the Mentors of his youth (Bêlínsky, to wit) because of their disparagement of Christ. Upon this came the two terrible and quite unmerited blows of fate which might have driven the most sane man to madness: the dungeons of the fortress with their examinations and the awful solitary confinement and the awful sentence of death (one of his fellow-prisoners did go mad), and the four years of prison life in the killing atmosphere of the convict gangs, where for no single moment, or at most when he collapsed under his load of bricks, did he feel himself a man (he subsequently depicted his experiences far more mildly than they were in reality); and then, when he had just begun to secure his position in life with his magazine at St. Petersburg, the sudden, totally senseless, prohibition of the same, only brought about by a misunderstanding; the ruin of himself and his brother and their families; the fresh unsuccessful attempt; the death of his nearest and dearest; the extremely exhausting, superhuman labour, which yet could not avert his collapse under the load of debt; the flight from a debtors' prison to

[1] The translations published by Vizetelly are still the only ones in English.

foreign countries; the wearisome, ill-rewarded toil which for years vexed him. All this might have worn out the strongest. No wonder that he had the sensation of being flayed alive, that every breath of air held pains in store for him. And added to this the more and more frequent and more exhausting attacks of his great malady, which made him for days unfit for any work, with battered limbs and a deathly weary brain; and yet the work pressed unceasingly; that impatient monitor flogged the sinking man on to fresh exertion. Then came fresh blows of Fate, followed by want of recognition, malicious accusations, biting mockery—a hellish life indeed! All the more wonderful remains his tenacious vitality—"like a cat's," never a complete collapse, although senses and mind threatened to vanish for ever; then the proud consciousness of the artist, to whom, in spite of all obstacles, his work is everything, in which he feels himself the great Master to whose words "they" will have to listen, and above all, the passionate love and sympathy for all the humiliated, affronted, and injured. What, for instance, remained rooted in his memory out of the whole gigantic city (London)? The image of the little ragged damsel to whom he gave in charity a silver coin and who thereupon fled like a wild animal before him and men in general to put her treasure in safety; not Westminster Abbey, nor the Fleet, nor England's Constitution impressed him so much. Even so it had fared shortly before with Tolstóy, on whom out of the whole life of the West only that well-known scene in Lucerne with the beggar-musician to whom nobody gave anything made an indelible impression; ay, the barbarians have lizard's eyes!

The vexations of life explain much in the outward appearance of his work—the defectiveness of the execution, the looseness in putting together, the repetitions and *longueurs*, the want of style in the various portions. He had simply not the time at command to go through his productions. No one copied out his "War and Peace" six times over, he would have been glad if he could have dictated it once to the end. The beginning, the part most fully thought over, is thus with him often far the best—the topsy-turvy continuation

does not correspond to it, gets confused, and the end does not tally with the beginning. Dostoévsky is no epic writer, *raconteur*, or depicter. Nature does not exist for him at all, descriptions of it are not forthcoming. He is interested only by man—*i.e.*, his spiritual life. But he is also no dramatist. Like a true Slav, he does not know at all how to keep a hold on himself, but loses himself in the boundless expanse. Even if longer life had been accorded him he would hardly have been able to control the "Karamázovs." How far from him comfortable, easygoing narration lay is shown by the fact that most of his works, and those the longest, always really begin just before the catastrophe, and with all their volumes occupy the scanty period of some days or at most some weeks. How little sense he had of dramatic differentiation is shown by the fact that his characters all talk the same language. Instinctively, it is plain, he felt this weakness of his, and chose for his novels the letter or first-person form of narration or recording a character's own experiences and impressions, whereby this monotony would no longer interfere; but at times the story suffered most seriously, as, for instance, the first person is most disastrous to the "Demons," and has constantly to be abandoned, and even then the form does not harmonise with the matter. In return Dostoévsky illuminates his figures from within outwards. One may be unable to form any idea how Raskólnikov or one of the Karamázovs or Mýshkin may have looked; but in return every impulse, every fibre of their psychical organisation, is very familiar to us—and they are very complicated organisms.

Dostoévsky neither relates nor describes: he places men face to face and speaks, analyses, and argues for them with a passionateness and enthusiasm, with an endurance and keenness, a versatility and profundity, which are as yet unmatched, especially in Russian Literature, which is not always particularly remarkable for passionateness. The lack of narrative talent he makes up for by an astonishing skill in tying the knot, by a most complex exposition in which we constantly happen upon riddles. In "Devils" it becomes a regular besetting sin, and the patience of the reader is put to a trying test.

How skilfully he manages to preserve appearances! The reader himself is convinced, like the authorities of the Court, that Mítya is a parricide, and after he has learned the true connection, he should go back to the examination of Mítya, and he will wonder at the masterliness with which by questions and answers that appearance could be evoked.

These general remarks relieve us of the trouble of showing up such defects as there may be as each work is dealt with, but they do not make us acquainted with the ideals, aims, and prejudices of the great Russian. In contemplating his works separately in chronological order we omit, where the matter is so abundant, all the smaller and less successful things, *e.g.*, "The Hobbledehoy" (Podrostok), or what is less characteristic, such as attempts to compete with Paul de Kock in amusing but risky anecdotes. Dostoévsky did not at once find the right way. What goes before his "Dead House" ("Myórtvy Dom") in 1862 mostly bears only single traits of his later development and only admits of their being suspected, *e.g.*, the fondness for heroes from the world of children) for quite definite psychological problems and such like. His early production lies on one side under the influence of Gógol, on the other under that of Dickens, Balzac, and Hoffmann. His first tale, which secured an enthusiastic reception from Nekrásov, Grigorióvich, and Bêlínsky, but compared with which what immediately followed fell off greatly and disappointed people, least of all indicated his true path. True, it is a town scene, and he remained always the painter of towns, though not of their pomp and splendour, but of their misery, poverty, and vice. True, it is saturated with the love of "little" people. It teaches us a lesson; for, look! this most insignificant, poor, and deserted of all clerks, about whom there is not an inch of the heroic, is yet capable of the greatest and most unselfish sacrifice, yet withal without the slightest posing, as if it all were a matter of course. To be sure, Dêvushkin, too, in his renunciation of all egotism, of all right to happiness of his own, is also but a herald of *smirênie*, of humility and self-abasement; but everything seems accidental, unintentional, without further outcome.

Succeeding tales give us other anecdotes of the same Dêv-ushkin under another name—how by stinting his mouth he saves up a small fortune for his sister-in-law, and it is found in the half-starved man's mattress; or how he has always to behave at the office fawningly and unlike a man, in order not to forfeit the favour of his superior and his post; and how his better self, his moral double, lays bare and condemns this loss of dignity. Nothing rose above the anecdote, even when he treated of his youthful heroes and their premature maturity, brought on by circumstances, or drew all sorts of uncongenial, nay wild and brutal, beasts.

The blows of Fate in 1847 and 1857 he bore with Christian resignation, as a heavy but merited trial; his religiousness grew, his contact with the people taught him only more emphatically the Russian longsuffering (*dolgoterpênie*), his "heroism of slavery," Christian resignation (*smirénie*), as panaceas for all ills. Instead of the preacher of these virtues, the first to have his say was the reporter, the MacKennan of the fifties, who was to tell the astounded public the truth concerning prisons and criminals. At bottom the truth was the old one: the people had long since anticipated it by the designation "Unfortunates." The "Notes from the Dead House" ("Zapíski ot Myórtvavo Dóma") were a vast revelation such as no Literature as yet had known, for Pellico's "Prigioni" was quite different. They were wrapped up, since the Censorship would never have allowed a direct report, in the form of posthumous records of a nobleman who commits murder out of jealousy and is condemned to a convict prison; after leaving prison, he remains in Siberia, and his papers the editor makes public. All allusions to political offenders or encounters with Poles were left out to start with. The report did not extend to the whole ten years' prison life, but portrayed only the impressions of the first year, being much the same as those later, and closed with a chapter on leaving the prison. The account refrained from complaints, sentimental outbursts, and appeals to the feelings. We have the objective spectator who reproduces what he has seen and heard: the people at their work, in church, at the bath, at the theatre; in

a healthy and sick condition, before and after chastisements; in peace, strife, and revolt; at the various times of the day and year; even with the creatures that come on the scene—buck, dogs, or eagle; then puts in the foreground out of the abundance of types some that are characteristic, and treats of their previous life. Only now and again a critical observation as to unnecessary rigours interrupts the calm delivery. The psychology of the "criminal" undergoes an extraordinarily deep analysis. The author sums up his observations to the following effect: "How much youth is ruthlessly buried in these men, how many great powers have been squandered in vain! Why, these people were exceptional—it may well be the most gifted and the strongest of our whole nation, but mighty powers have been brought to nothing and expended in vain, and that abnormally, illegally, and irrevocably. And who is to blame for it? Ay, who is to blame?" We can answer him: Often precisely those towards whom he will inculcate "longsuffering" and "submission." How the individual becomes a criminal is shown from selected instances with heart-rending tragicalness. We become familiar with the psychology of the *détenu*—his dreamy, over-wrought nature, his almost childish frivolity, the irresistible impulse now and again to show himself master of himself, to drink or gamble away his scanty earnings; a sullen silence, defiance, repressed fury, often under the mask of meditative calmness; irritation constantly breaks through in abuse and envy, in love of gossip, in meddling with others' concerns; although there are instances also of sensible good-humour, delight in jesting, and mockery, almost morbid ambition, the endeavour to play a part at any price. Thus even the convict prison does not wipe out the difference of temperaments. Only one thing is common to all, the instinctive, inextinguishable hatred of the peasant and the soldier towards his highly-born fellow-convict! And over all hangs heavily the sense of melancholy, of being borne down. Before all floats one aim—freedom, which they picture to themselves as more precious than it ever could be in reality. The tattered fellow outside seems to the convict a king. All consciousness of guilt is absent; they always feel that they have acted within

their right, they could not do otherwise, especially in offences against the authorities. The punishment is accepted as a necessary and natural evil; there can never be any question of reformation. Neither the State nor its prisons have any capacity in that direction. From other memorials of Dostoévsky's we know who alone can lay claim to that. That the whole portraiture was animated by the purest philanthropy, which unearthed God's image among the half-shaved and branded wretches does not need to be insisted on.

From this time on the sick man remains among the criminals, among those who, throwing off Christian humility, arrogate to themselves rights over their kind, place themselves above good and evil, and hatch out an idea or a theory that makes everything permissible to them. Thus there came into being some years later, in 1866, when the journalistic activity was broken off, the novel "Crime and Punishment." The idea of Raskólnikov's dreadful act was in the air; almost at the same time similar crimes were committed in Paris and in Russia by students. The medical experts who treat of the case, *e.g.*, the French work of Loygue on Dostoévsky (Paris, 1904), are in the right when they regard Raskólnikov as a maniac. This view was, anyhow, not wholly shared by the author, who put the full moral responsibility for the act on the doer of it, and who, indeed, meant to follow the first part with a second, one of atonement and moral regeneration; it is a good thing, certainly, that, like Gógol, he did not carry out all that he intended. A more heartrending picture there can nowise be—not the idea itself, as it at last takes firm root in the brain of the student, and the way he is then just mechanically forced into performing the act, as if he had gone too near machinery in motion with a bit of his clothing and had been caught and cut to pieces by it, and the way the one intended crime instantly evokes another and quite unintentional one; so much as the further consequences of the unholy act—the severing of all ties that bind him to his beloved belongings, nay to mankind and Nature themselves; the instinctive impulse of self-preservation in constant conflict with horror of himself, with the need for confession, with the consciousness

of guilt, until all dissimulation is thrown away as burdensome and purposeless, and the deed is confessed ; lastly, the doubts whether a crime has really been committed, whether the atonement is necessary or all is only a trick of the nerves. The abundance of subordinate plots, episodes, and digressions—the experienced examining justice, who prefers frank confession to the finest circumstantial evidence, and slowly but surely drives the criminal to it by the obsession of the idea, which haunts him like a pallid angel ; the duel of tongues between the two, where he plays with him like the cat with the mouse—show the dialectic mastery of the great sophist. With the main action the other criminal stands in no connection, the one without dialectic or obsession, but for all that with perverse inclinations and shattered nerves, whose hallucinations conjure up a slice of the spirit-world before him, and whom in the end loathing of himself and the world drives to suicide. And the Marmeládov family—the drunkard of a father, whom yet his instinct tells that he is an unfortunate, not a reprobate, that from him, as from the other "swine" of God, mercy will not be withheld ; the far more unhappy mother ; and their Sónya, who feeds them all with her shame, making just as fruitless a sacrifice as Raskólnikov himself, although, notably in the scenes with him over the reading of the Gospel, she verges narrowly on melodrama ; the mother and sister of Raskólnikov, the good, upright, but limited Razumêkhin and the rest—what a wealth of figures ! Over them all the hot, evil-smelling vapour of the great city in summer, among the tall houses, in all the wretched dens with the miasmas of all vices and crimes. Raskólnikov is at the same time used by the author as the mouthpiece of his own views ; the tirades concerning Napoleon and other great heroes, *i.e.*, the criminals of History, since there is no difference between murdering a female usurer and dosing mobs with shells, are a piece of his own Slavophile wisdom which he smuggles in and leaves unrefuted ; details over which, like much that is theatrical, kissing the earth and the like, there might be disputes. It might also be a mark of the Russophile that obviously it was first the wicked Western theories that

confused the moral consciousness of the worthy Raskólnikov, that he never would have killed the "Louse" if he had not torn himself adrift from his *póchva*, or native soil, and that it is first by the kiss of that *póchva* that he is solemnly won back again to morality; fortunately Svidrigaílov is there, as to whom the Westernisers are quite blameless. For all these additions of doubtful value the novel amply repays us. Figures and scenes, the astounding masterliness of the analysis—only think of Raskólnikov's demeanour in the murder scene, the abrupt alternation of unconscious, half-obfuscated action and spontaneous, instinctive impulses—high above all productions of his contemporaries, anticipate the whole subsequent evolution, and hence could not even at once be appreciated according to their deserts, and the estimation of the work has been constantly rising, being much higher in 1906 than it was in 1866. Of what European novel, not only of the sixties, could this be asserted with equal justice?

Raskólnikov is a double nature, a new Goládkin. For the doings of the one man in him the other is not answerable, but the devil in him, with his "gentleman's morality," which so boldly overrides the life of a "Louse," becomes himself a louse in the eyes of the Christian and remorseful penitent. Full of such double natures is the next great novel, which avoids the dangerous contact with public life (the examining justice rightly holds Raskólnikov fortunate that only the old usurers fell a victim to his manias; he might just as easily have turned out a Karakózov), and is devoted to individual life, viz., "The Idiot" (1868)—a most singular and upsetting work. We again pass by the secondary characters, the family of General Yepanchín, although even in the breast of his Aglaia two souls seem to dwell, pass over Slavophile and Orthodox thrusts, such as the tirades against Catholicism, as being the creed of Antichrist which—let no one think of the irony against the author's self—are put in the mouth of the Prince before his epileptic attack. We only devote a few observations to the three principal personages. The "Idiot," Prince Mýshkin, is presented to us in a lucid interval between his dismissal from the foreign "Home" and his lifelong confinement in a lunatic asylum;

he is a "yúrodivy," or "natural," a personage that occurs in every Russian historical novel. Marked by God with the "great" and holy malady and its contortions, he is half laughed at and pitied by the people as a fool, half respected and admired as a saint, who alone among the cowardly, the brutalised, and the corrupt, dares to fling the truth, morality, and the gospel in the face of the cruel Iván, the tyrant Borís, the frivolous Demetrius, and the cowardly Shúysky. Such, too, is the Idiot with his heart thirsting for love and dispensing forgiveness and consolation, crazy, but the embodiment of humaneness itself; the most indifferent cannot wholly evade his magical influence. Most enticing and repellent is his working on the couple Nastásia and Rogózhin, whose natures, as contrasted with his coherent and undivided one, conceal the most discordant contradiction, the sharpest dissonance—Nastásia, the passionate *hetaira* (so she accuses herself of being, but she is so only in part) following unbridled impulses which must plunge her in ruin against her better judgment and feelings; the repentant Magdalene, a victim of another's fault and passions, those of Tótsky; Rogózhin, who trembles with untamable passion for her, tortured by wild jealousy and must kill her because she is least of all his at the moment when she abandons herself to him for ever, but otherwise reason, prudence, and self-restraint itself, who after his crime recovers his moral balance for ever, which would by no means be in keeping with Raskólnikov.

In this tangle of contradictions the inevitable catastrophe comes about with all its dreadfully lifelike details, which each of themselves deserve special dwelling on (such as the demeanour of Rogózhin after the murder, Nastásia and Gámya, and so on). More interesting is the picture of the Idiot, the epileptic and his attacks, the moment of seizure, when his vital senses undergo an unheard-of exaltation, and the gloomy pressure before and after.

While Dostoévsky seemed here quite absorbed in the depicting of abnormal individual conditions, his country, even after the breakdown of the attempted assassination, had by no means fallen back into its regular paths of "smirénie"

and "dolgoterpênie." Nihilistic propaganda had secret effect still; isolated instances, such as the trial of Necháev, *i.e.*, that of the eighty-seven of 1871, after the killing of Ivánov, the alleged traitor of 1869, proved this only too clearly. Then Dostoévsky had recourse to his pen to help eradicate this evil weed from Russian soil, and thus came into being his "Devils," or "Bêsy," printed in 1871–72 in the *Russian Messenger*, founded on Necháev's crime, only that Ivánov was called Shátov, and Necháev Verkhovénsky, junior. The fundamental idea of the story is given by the quotation from Luke viii. about the devils leaving the possessed man and passing into the swine, and the explanation which the fevered father Verkhovénsky subjoins: "Those that passed out of the stricken man and into the swine are all the plague-sores, miasmas, and uncleannesses, all the devils and devils' children that have gathered together in our great, dear sick man, our Russia, for centuries. But a great thought and will may bless it from above, and forth will come all these unclean things, all the uncleannesses and foulness that festered on the surface, and will intreat of themselves to pass into swine, nay perhaps have already passed. And such are we" (*i.e.*, the men of the forties, the most innocent, dear, truly Russian merry Liberal gabble; the dear, sage, Radical Old Russian nonsense)—"we and the Nihilists and Petrúsha" (his son) "and his comrades, and I perhaps first and foremost—and we senseless and possessed ones will fall headlong from the cliff into the sea and all be drowned, our only resource, for we can find no other; but the sick man will become whole, and place himself at Christ's feet, and all will be touched who behold it."

In order to avoid misunderstandings, the foreign reader must be reminded of the chronological sequence of occurrences. The "Nihilists" depicted by Dostoévsky occupy an intermediate stage between the heroes of the "Tempest-tossed Sea" (Pisemsky's, who only prate and read and distribute manifestoes), and those of "Virgin Soil," who go among the people. Thus Russian novels—others of consequence are

not devoted to this phenomenon, and would be quite out of the question, in face of the Censorship—treat only of the preliminary stage of the "Nihilist" movement; the great revolutionaries Bakúnin and Lavróv, Prince Kropotkin (*cf.* his attractive and striking "Memoirs of a Revolutionist"), the would-be Assassins, or Sophia Perróvsky, heroine of one of Turgénev's prose-poems, have no existence for the Russian novel, least of all for "Devils." Even the title is misleading; he does not deal with the "Devils" of Nihilism, but only with mere hangers-on, the camp followers that accompany every army. Doubtless the Gospel too only means caricatures of devils, who prefer drowning swine's corpses to the kingdom of darkness. Dostoévsky draws nothing but caricatures, from the writer Karmazínov, coquetting with the "revolutionary" youth, arrogant in his self-importance and purblind ignorance of things—meant for Turgénev; and Verkhovénsky senior, the consistent Radical, whom even his befooled patroness at last sees through as a sheer parasite, a mere (male) "prizhiválka" (parasite), yet lets her Rúdin go on sponging out of sheer pity, down to those circulators of manifestoes who do not even venture to read the contents of them and distribute them out of sheer politeness, as they can refuse nothing to any one decently dressed. The book was inspired by passionate hatred and aroused the same. Even to-day no "Liberal" critic can be just to it. But we insist once more, Dostoévsky did not paint the heroes, but the Falstaffs, the silly adepts, the half and wholly crazed adherents of Nihilism. He was indeed fully within his right, of course there were such, particularly between 1862 and 1869, but there were not only such; even Necháev, the prototype of Petrúsha, impresses us by a steel-like energy and a hatred for the upper classes which we wholly miss in the windbag and intriguer Petrúsha.

To all the victims seduced by Petrúsha is common the one-sided development in a fixed direction; one single idea takes possession of the brain of the Russian and he is not in a position to cope with it. Nevertheless, he believes devoutly,

and lo! his whole life passes, as it were, in writhing under a stone which has fallen and half crushed him already. The fear of not being considered advanced enough and shame drives them to the conventicles and entangles them unceasingly. The skilful agitator works on their vanity with title and rank and on their feelings with sentimentality; above all, no single idea of their own must remain behind in their heads, and the material for a member of the "Fivers," who ostensibly cover all Russia with their organisation, is ready to hand. Yet these, bless you! are no men of action, mostly idealists, Fourierists, hatchers of all sorts of socialist Utopias; any outward activity is by no means to their mind, being hounded on by Petrúsha does not please them; shortly before the momentous decision to slay Shátov as a dreaded informer they are for dissolving their "Fivers" and founding a quite new and quite secret society for spreading democratic ideas. There are the strangest creatures among them; the most methodic and rigid doctrinaire is the long-eared Shigalev, who unfortunately never gets to read to an end his minute on the solution of the social question. We gather only from fragments the desperate leaps of his logic, how, starting from absolute freedom, he must end in absolute despotism; he divides men into masters, "a tenth of the whole who are personally free, and lord it over the remaining nine-tenths who must do without any will of their own, and by a series of successive transformations must recover their original innocence and establish an earthly Paradise"—you see, the parody of Nietzsche before he came is complete. The flabby Virgínsky, a "servant of bright hopes, of a common task," only calls out when the crime has been committed, "Not that. That is not it at all."

A Lipútin, miser and household tyrant, intriguer and gossip, yet raves about and firmly believes in a direct social accord in Russia, although, beginning with himself, there was far and wide no soul forthcoming who could even in the remotest degree resemble a member of a universal social republic and Happy Family. "God knows how these men come to be!"

involuntarily exclaimed one who had happened on this unexpected Fourierist. And about these protagonists the train of cheap-jacks like the Jew Lamshín; of blockheads of every kind like Lieutenant Erkel, who is enthusiastic, not about ideas but personages; Tolkachénko, proud of his knowledge of the people acquired in public-houses; and lastly the women, from the young and pretty student, who has cast aside all prejudices; the Nihilist midwife, like Mashúrin in "Virgin Soil," the proclaimer of free love, of remaining together as long as you are not tired of one another—the chapter "Among Our Own" is one of the most amusing and biting satires which one can imagine. Over them all stands young Peter Verkhovénsky, adroit and capable, frivolous and impudent, selfish and unscrupulous, impatient and haughty, looking down on his humble tools with ill-concealed contempt, who, after he has led astray and duped them all, makes off in good time, no Socialist—"Let the future see to it what forms human society shall assume"—but an ambitious political agitator with tyrannical instincts, who wants to clear the ground for the coming upturn, for the erection of the new stone edifice, because he hopes to play a leading part in it; in this hustle for power an enthusiast and a Romantic—though to be sure Dostoévsky never makes it clear for a moment whether Peter only gets drunk on his own phrases, a moral habitual drunkard, out of sheer delight in the jangle of the words and the puzzled faces of the bystanders, or whether he means it seriously, is really a political clown or only makes believe to be. The whole hubbub in the town, the loosening of authority, is only possible through the weak-minded Pompadour[1] letting the reins slip from his hands while his ambitious consort, befooled by Peter, prompts herself to a mission of conciliation, a winning back of the refractory, and a moral victory over them until it comes to the uproar and topsy-turvydom at the literary matinée, in reproducing which the satanic glee of Dostoévsky in trampling underfoot all Liberal æsthetic prestige becomes manifest quite undisguisedly.

[1] Shchedvín's term for a governor.

That is only one, and indeed the less important, aspect of the work, a pamphlet, not against Nihilism, which could not feel itself hit by it, but against the dregs and refuse of Nihilism. The enthusiastic groveller before Byzantine Orthodoxy and Mongolian autocracy—in his eyes the two Palladia of Russia, and other nations are happy when they can boast of even one—who had the boldness to accuse the Westernisers of "flunkeydom" towards ideas, troubled himself little about the socio-political side of his work; other things concerned him far more, his seekers and deniers of God, his maniacs and decadents. That name was in those days not coined by a long way; but Dostoévsky always anticipates everything, while Tolstóy and Turgénev scarcely hobble after; Stavrógin is a moral and, as that night shows, a physical decadent, though, together with Shátov and Kirílov, the real hero of the book, to whom even Peter pays court like a lackey, on whom he bases his most ambitious plans—if one can style groundlessly frivolous improvisations or sheer hallucinations plans. Stavrógin is a new edition of Svidrigaílov, a voluptuary, a hunter of women on principle, and ends in the same way by suicide, only that he is a civilised sucking-pig; stuffed, that is, with socialism, atheism, and contempt for Russians by his dear master, the old Radical Verkhovénsky, whereas Svidrigáilov is merely a pig, not "sicklied" by the "pale cast" or any "thought." For that matter, owing to the defective (deliberately chosen) form, the author does not show us his hero, but leaves him in semi-darkness, and lets us see him in his last degeneration. From the allusions of others we learn what an important part he has played towards them all, and all that they expect of him. Tired, unstrung, absent, clinging to his own thoughts and remembrances of unexpiated guilt and crime; indifferent, restraining himself by a strong effort without being able to suppress quite unaccountable promptings of caprice; bored, and only now and again spurred by sensual fits; a sickly old man at thirty, a decadent in a word, he rolls dreamily to his inevitable death, sowing destruction, not only in women's hearts, those of Dásha, Líza, and the rest, but all around him—the strength of a Titan, if we are to

believe others, puffed away because, by natural tendency and wrong training, it has snapped the bond with home, without which there is no salvation. That bond the ex-Nihilist Shátov has picked up again, the belief in his Orthodox Russia and her world mission which, as a renegade from the West, he proclaims all the more vehemently. "Do you know which is now on the whole earth the only people acceptable to God, destined in the future to renovate and save the world in the name of the new God, to which alone the keys of life and of the new Message are given?" he arrogantly inquired of Stavrógin, who himself had once suggested to him the idea, which he has adopted and remodelled with fervour, but which the Moscow Slavophiles had hit upon thirty years before. This Moscow Slavophile lore Dostoévsky himself imbibed more forcibly every year, and now equipped his Shátov with it very liberally, speaking himself by his mouth, and attacking Bêlínsky and the Liberals vehemently and unjustly. Thus Stavrógin has transformed the atheistic cosmopolitan into a Russian sectary; for Russia is full of miracles, which the Western wonders at in silence, but he has instilled into Kirílov a far more interesting idea. Kirílov is a maniac, a recluse, who for four years has seldom spoken to any one, and is really losing the command of grammatical speech; in exchange he has found heaven upon earth. God was invented in order to make earthly life and the terrors of death bearable to men. He who does not accept this deception, who refutes the fear of death by a lordly throwing away of his life, that highest and last demonstration of the force of will, to him everything on earth is good and happy. Now, man is not as yet true man; there will yet be a new, happy, and haughty man. He to whom it becomes no matter whether he lives or does not live will be the new man. He who shall overcome pain and the dread of the phantoms "Death" and "the beyond" will himself be God. He who dares to kill himself has learned the secret of the deception, he is God.

This man-God, an idea quite unknown before Dostoévsky, will lead the world to perfection. Then they will divide the world into two parts, from the Gorilla to the abolition

of God, and from the abolition of God ("God is and remains dead. . . . We have killed Him. There was never a greater deed" says Nietzsche) to the remodelling of the earth and man, man will become God and be changed physically ("Must we not ourselves become gods?" Nietzsche). "I wish to explain my selfwill; though I may be the only one, yet will I do it," and he kills himself in reality as the wretched Peter with trembling and hesitation hopes, in order to make the suicide take on himself the guilt of Shátov's murder. The scene of this suicide is one of the most exciting that ever was written. Here Dostoévsky really plays unmercifully with his own and our nerves. In the end even the old Radical Stepán Verkhovénsky will find God without having sought after Him—to be sure, not until he is on his death-bed, but in scenes not without a striking effect. The figures of women, as also a quantity of the most interesting details, we here pass over. The novel suffers from its form, yet this on its part relieves the author of many inessential questions.

In the succeeding years (1873–80) the author went back to his old journalistic activity (of 1861–64), yet he now wrote his "Diary of a Writer" quite alone in detached monthly parts. He commented in it on events of the day, even points of criminal practice, political also—the Turkish War—gave out literary reminiscences, and drew one and another novelistic contribution, notably the splendid picture of a woman, "The Gentle One." Above all, however, he proclaimed Slavophile maxims and even achieved with them the only phenomenal success of his life when, on June 8th, 1880, the unforgettable "Pushkin Days" at Moscow, he kindled by his enthusiastic memorial speech on the poet the momentary enthusiasm of all, even the Westernisers. The fundamental aim of these essays as of the speech may be thus summed up: "Is it not in Orthodoxy alone that the truth lies, and the salvation of the whole Russian people, and in times to come of the whole of mankind also?" Did not it alone preserve the Godlike image of Christ in all its purity? And perhaps the main destiny of the Russian people in the fortunes of mankind consists in keeping Christ's image in such purity, and when the time has

come showing that image to the world, which has lost its way. In the famous Pushkin speech he follows in Gógol's train. The latter had spoken of the only manifestation of the Russian intellect; he added a prophecy concerning it. "Pushkin's capacity for clinging on to all literatures and models and embracing them (!) was only one of the powers of the Russian national spirit, which was chosen out as the all-embracing, world, or universal spirit, and in that consisted the popular character and the future of Pushkin's poetry. But the same idea had instinctively lain at the root of even the reforms of Peter the Great: he had united those that were strange, eliminated the contradictions. Ay, the heritage of the Russian was unconditionally all Europe, nay the whole world. To become a true Russian, wholly and entirely so, that in the end simply meant to be a brother of all men, one of the universal race. And lastly I believe that we, *i.e.*, our successors, will all, without exception, realise that to become a real Russian simply means endeavouring to bring final peace among European complications, to show the malice of Europe a way of escape in the Russian soul, the all-embracing and all-uniting, to make it feel in brotherly love for all our other brothers, and may be to utter the final fiat of great and universal harmony, fraternal and lasting agreement of all peoples, according to the Gospel of Christ"—for Dostoévsky even brings about the synthesis of Westernism and Slavophilism. "The Westerners, too, do believe in universal humanity and that national barriers, prejudices, and egotistical demands will cease to be. But if a common humanity is a Russian idea, every one of us would have to become Russian and stop despising his countrymen and recognise their national genuineness. For this people has, in spite of all barbarism and tyranny, retained its moral graces, its good-heartedness, honesty, sincerity, openness, and general accessibility of mind, all in harmonious union, whence the power of our poet, who gets from the people its simplicity, purity, gentleness, breadth of view, and kindness of heart." All these dreams are so fair, above all they aim at such humane deductions, that one waives the testing of the premises, and prefers to leave out

the coarse words "Chauvinism," "empty theory," and "Utopia."

But in the long run the journalist and Romantic could not repress the man of letters. At the end of the seventies he at last energetically took up a subject which had occupied him since 1870, and called into being his most extensive novel, though he only executed the first part of it, "The Brothers Karamázov." Since only one part, and that simply the prelude to the second, the real story, is given, and there are only suggestions forthcoming with regard to it, we can express ourselves more briefly, as we still cannot remove the doubts as to the conception of the whole. It is on the surface only a family novel, the story of the three Karamázovs, Mítya, Iván, and Alosha, and of a fourth personage, their half-brother, the lackey Smerdyakóv, conceived only from the damp of the bathroom (according to a notorious tradition) and not like other men; a fifth, the father of these, a Svidrigáilov, who does not end by suicide, but is perfect in filthiness, a "virtuoso" of the obscene, especially when he boasts before his "piggies," or children, of his experiments in Sadism. From his father the eldest, Mítya, inherited his sensuality, from his mother energy and strength. The cynical, sneaking, drivelling perversity of his father is alien to this dreadfully expansive and violent nature; he plunges into the abyss head down and heels up, because this unseemly position is the most suitable to him, but in falling he will still strike up his hymn to God. Lustfulness, the quality of insects (Stavrógin is an insect too), is in his blood, and as with all the Karamázovs it boils up into wild outbursts, for beauty is something terrible and incomprehensible. The worst of it is, that many a one begins with the Sixtine ideal and ends with that of Sodom, while another, an admirer of Sodom, ends by espousing with all the fire of youth the Sixtine—for even in Sodom there is beauty, particularly for the mass of mankind. Here God and the devil contend on the field of the human heart. Thus there is in Mítya, as in his two brothers and in so many of our poet's heroes, a double nature. The grossest of them is capable of the greatest self-sacrifice: he must be purified of his dross by great suffering,

like Raskólnikov, only that the latter expiated a real and Mítya only an imaginary crime. With the former the examining justice at once hit on the right thing, although a third person, who had no part in it, took the murder on himself. Here he fastened firmly on the nearest but most false trail. Circumstantial evidence pointed to the parricide of Mítya, and after all the examinations and proceedings, wonders of forensic art, the jury condemned him. He knew nothing at all of the murder. It had been done by Smerdyakóv, a moral Quasimodo, a true Dostoévskian, half Shopets,[1] half fop, a bug, a Karamazov, conceived by an idiot beggar-woman in a fright, an epileptic devoid of religion, a sceptic and a rationalist for all his want of education. But Iván, the second of the brothers, a lawyer, has guided his hand to the murder, having inculcated the principle "Everything is permissible," at which Raskólnikov arrived by his own thinking, into the lackey, until he put it into action. Smerdyakóv hung himself after he had confessed the deed to its instigator, but the testimony was disregarded in Court because he gave it in delirium interwoven with the illusions of his senses.

The tragedy, the psychological crisis of Iván, is far more important than that of Mítya, and wholly bursts the framework of the book, even causing "The Brothers" not to be a family novel. As in "War and Peace" in the original edition, which gave the historical and philosophical dissertations in the text itself instead of relegating them to the appendix, simply left out by the translators, just as philosophy and critical reflections about heroes and theories of them are forced into epic poetry, even so religious philosophy overruns the family novel; and the sheets that are devoted to questions about God and the immortality of the soul, the arguments, chapters in length, between Iván and Alosha, between the former and the devil—who, when stripped of all Mephistophelian romance, is a wretched, matter-of-fact little devil, as befits admirers of Moleschott and Büchner—are among the most brilliant and profound thought, or rather feeling, that there has ever been

[1] A sect who "make themselves eunuchs for the kingdom of heaven's sake."

in this world concerning God and immortality. To the true Russian, says Dostoévsky, these questions are the most important, although Iván is principally irritated by something else; his mind is Euclidian, quite material, incapable of solving any metaphysical problem. In glowing consciousness of right, which he sees constantly infringed, he protests against all harmony of the world, against the lie of love for one's neighbour: "One can only love men from a distance, near at hand they are insufferable. The world is based on shapelessness, with its implied sufferings: one results from the other, but I demand retaliation; the murderer and his victims must not sound a joint Hosannah to the Creator. Nothing should be forgiven, and without forgiveness there is no harmony. Out of love for humanity I prefer to stick to my unavenged injury, my tireless indignation. The entry to harmony is too dear; therefore I give it back. Not that I do not acknowledge God, only I must respectfully return Him the ticket." What men have made of religion, what it serves them for, Iván shows in the allegory of the "Grand Inquisitor of Seville." Doubtless this disguise is chosen on account of the Censorship, but it applies to all positive religion: you may substitute for Grand Inquisitor the name Pobêdonóstsev or Calvin without altering the substance. Since sins are committed in the name of Religion, Christ appears once more upon earth, performs miracles, preaches, and is thrown into prison at the command of the Inquisitor, to be burnt the next morning. In the night the Inquisitor appears to justify himself before Christ: "Thy true teaching is not suited for mankind, only for a chosen few; it indeed makes man free, who knows no greater vexation than to submit himself to a master; but Thou biddest him reject all that man needs—miracles, secrets, authority, the earthly sword, earthly bread. Therefore in conjunction with Satan we have rectified Thy teaching: we make men happy, let them work and feast, commit sins and obtain pardon, and give them the happiness of weak beings such as they are. They will die softly, and beyond the grave find only eternal death. But we keep the secret and entice them, for their happiness, with heavenly and

eternal rewards. It is only we, the guardians of the secret, that remain unhappy. Thou disturbest our doings; therefore I will have Thee burned." Christ does not answer, but only kisses the old man on his bloodless lips. Under this the only possible change in the Inquisitor takes place: he opens the gates and drives Christ out, crying, "Never come again!"

Owing to this denial of God and immortality there is evolved in Iván the most logical and crassest egotism, pure delight and pleasure in life, at least till his thirtieth year shall come: "Then, no doubt, I shall throw the cup away without having tasted the dregs, and depart, I know not whither"—a further refined Epicureanism. This theory of life, the triumph of his logical and analytical mind, is bowled over by the logic of Smerdyakóv, who simply draws the conclusions. A severe illness, with its hallucinations—devils, &c.—topples him over, yet his strong constitution will perhaps overcome it, though the Epicurean in him will surely not recover.

Such are the Karamázovs, the representatives of the coarsest but sheerest materialism, and against this the whole purpose of the novel is directed, as before in the "Devils" Nihilism was attacked, only that the former is more nobly represented, notably by Iván, Miúsov, and others. The passionate—all moderation was far from Dostoévsky's nature—combating of materialism is not here carried to a conclusion. If in previous novels he had contented himself with merely depicting the denial of morality, authority, and belief, and their consequences, he now proceeds to create definite types. The youngest of the Karamazovs, Alósha, the pure and pious, goes into a monastery. He is no fanatic, no mystic, "an early lover of men" who chose monastic life because it seemed to him the only way out for his soul, which was striving to pass from the darkness of earthly wickedness into the light of Love. His spiritual father, Zosíma, proclaims quite Tolstoyan doctrines before Tolstoy: the idea of a service of humanity, its fraternity and solidarity, flickers out visibly. People meet it with ridicule; for how shall one give up his habits? whither shall this slave go when he is so accustomed to satisfy his numerous

needs, which he himself has invented? The heaping up of things accompanies diminution of desire; therefore I cut off from myself superfluous and useless wants, humble my selfish, stubborn will, and thus attain, with God's help, to freedom of mind, and with it delight of mind. But Alesha is not a Karamázov for nothing: in his blood, too, the "insect" rages; he too must submit to trials and purgings, whence Zosíma extracts a promise from him to leave the cloister after his death and go into the world, where he might find occasion to put into practice Zosíma's bequeathed injunctions—"Be no man's judge: humble affection is a terrible power which effects more than violence; only active Love can secure for us faith." Yet this part of the work was never to be written, for Dostoévsky died no later than January 28, 1881, when he was not yet sixty. Incidentally let it be repeated that here only the main relation and the principal personage of the novel have been enumerated. The latter seems at first to be Alósha, then is Mítya, and ends by being Iván. The tangle of minor relations, episodes, other personages, notably women and children, of two-natured beings like Grúshenka and so forth, can here not even be hinted at.

The premature death of Dostoévsky was a most painful loss to Russian—nay, to European—Literature, in which he was a unique phenomenon, though at the same time a most significant or, rather, disturbing one. The great, healthy artist Turgénev always moves along levelled paths, in the fair avenues of an ancient landowner's park. Æsthetic pleasure is in his well-balanced narrative of how Jack and Jill did *not* come together: deeper ideas he in nowise stirs in us. Tolstóy, indeed, has depth. But his ideas are old ones; we have found them in the sixteenth century—*e.g.*, among the Polish Arians, this exclusive extolling of physical labour as alone acceptable to God, the despising of knowledge, the forbidding of resistance to injury with the same arguments, the forbidding of judging or fighting and ingenious attempts to escape the outcome of the forbiddance, the new interpretation of the Gospel texts. Just as to these Arians we may or may not

adhere to Tolstóy and yet cling obstinately to the sphere of practical morality and love of one's neighbour, and leave for no single moment the earth and its dust: to one whom this does not suffice Tolstóy has nothing to offer, since all metaphysics and mystics, every transcendent prompting or idealism, are alien—nay, hateful—to him. The thoroughly logical and clear mind of this seeker of the truth cannot disturb or disquiet, not to say excite, any one; he appeals exclusively to our understanding as a philosopher, as an artist to the outward senses, from his great historical paintings down to the smallest *genre* pictures, from the study of the simplest moral impulses to the most complex, probing the consciences of himself and others without leniency or hypocrisy. His skill, his sincerity, are greater, more comprehensive, and deeper than his thought. Quite other is the dæmonic, mystic, ecstatic visionary, satanic Dostoévsky, Nietzsche's great teacher, his profound man, "the one psychologist of whom I could learn something, whose acquaintance is one of the happiest incidents of my life." Moral or artistic equilibrium or calm are unknown to him: he is ever aiming at the highest or the lowest, gives us glimpses of other worlds, of spiritual abysses, of the most confused contrast between feeling and thinking, instinct and purpose, of the realm of the unknown, the elemental, and the mechanical. How often he speaks in sheer riddles! With Turgénev and Tolstóy everything is clear—even the dots are put on the *i*'s; while with him we ask in confusion and disturbance, "How does he mean that? Is he serious about it? Is he laughing at us?"—as, for instance, when he declares that Stavrógin was not mad. He says nothing idly, as one can convince oneself if one goes back to particular chapters, the relations of which first become plain through the succeeding explanation. At every fresh examination of his text one chances on new details to which he apparently attaches no weight, as if he had simply thrown them there, in descriptions of the figures, in quick retorts, in uncontrolled movements; in them, however, lies the deepest meaning. To whom could it occur to write commentaries on Tolstóy or Turgénev? Dostoévsky needs them if one

wants to understand him at a single reading: without guidance much otherwise escapes the keenest-witted reader.

What did he not—and that how deeply—think out and, above all, feel out! Let no one take exception to his exclusive, patriotic, and Orthodox mask, to his non-recognition of other creeds: that with him is a mere surface deposit. Nay, as Shátov does to Stavrógin, we might put the question to him whether he believes in God. Mayhap he would have to answer, just like Shátov: "I believe in Russia, I believe in its Orthodox doctrine, I believe in Christ's body, I believe that a Second Coming will take place in Russia, I believe—— " Stavrógin insists: "But in God, in God?" And he answers hesitatingly: "I—I shall believe in God as well!" At any rate he has won to this belief with strong efforts. This striving after faith is a characteristic feature of his later works; but were keener arguments against God, immortality, and another world ever forged? Let people not be deceived because they are put in the mouth of a madman—*e.g.*, Kirílov—for indeed he is much sounder, harmonious, and more homogeneous than many of the most sensible people that meet us in the story or in life. It may be asked whether his defence approximates even remotely to the weight of the attacks on belief. During his lifetime, and even for a full decade after his death, misjudged in this as in all other matters, Dostoévsky by no means received the full or just appreciation of his aims. The public and criticism were by no means prepared for such a manifestation, which anticipated in Russia all that the West slowly and at a later day brought to birth. His position as a writer, not as a man, grew in other countries almost faster than at home, where men admired the preacher rather than the artist. What was Turgénev compared with him, notwithstanding that they paid him three hundred roubles a printed page and the other only one hundred, which the poor fellow felt so bitterly? The "mystic dread," the dæmonic in beauty, love, and woman, the decadence, the supermanhood, the symbolism—we find it all in Dostoévsky before Nietzsche, Strindberg, or Maeterlinck, and you find in him also much else of which his

contemporaries never allowed people to dream, such as the whole modern psychical pathology. Astonishing, too, is the force of sensuousness in him: erotic problems do not leave hold of his mind; they even intervene, in "Crime and Punishment," without much occasion; they display themselves in "The Idiot" and "Devils"; on them is based the centre of gravity of the "Karamázovs"—*e.g.*, the jealous rivalry between father and son over Grúshenka, not to mention his smaller works. We know that much that was alarming, *e.g.*, in "Devils," was suppressed by the publishers. This sensuousness borders on the perverse, tortures and pains. His opponents spoke of a Russian Sadite, quite unjustly. However much eroticism there is in his writings, it is never a matter of how Jack wooed Jill and did not or did get her: he is occupied with other and more weighty problems, and even in these he differs, much to his advantage, from his fellow-craftsmen. As long as metaphysical questions —questions of good and evil or of the darker side of the human spirit—are raised, so long will Dostoévsky be read. He is one of the few in the world's literature who can never be forgotten: he leaves behind him the profoundest impressions, which can never be effaced, and he stirs the innermost fibres of our spirit. What most enthrals us in him is his fervent love, his respect for man as man, whom he finds even in the criminal, the drunkard, and the prostitute. What writer has created more charming, innocent, or unhappy children? Dostoévsky was a pitier of all, and that those felt instinctively who crowded round the "great Dæmon" of his country, sought advice and help of him, and gave the hapless man the funeral of a king.

However much one may argue or fall out with Dostoévsky—he had, be it noted, as is not remarkable in the case of a Russian of the Nicholas regime, no political sense—one is bound to love and honour him. Perhaps there are in the world's literature figures of greater talent or, rather, mere repute; a warmer more feeling heart there certainly never was. Not in "Faust," but rather in "Crime and Punishment," does "the whole woe of mankind" take hold of us.

CHAPTER XV

MEN OF LETTERS OF THE SECOND RANK

Other men of letters of the "forties," Grigorôvich and Písemsky—The novel with a purpose — Radical and Conservative — The men of letters of the sixties and seventies—The "Naródniki," Rêshétnikov, Levítov, Uspénsky, and Zlatovrátsky—Pomyalóvsky—Modern *belles lettres* as represented by Boborýkin or Dánchenko—The historical novel—Modern women writers.

Even more than in other literatures the flood of novels threatened in that of Russia to sweep away all elegant Literature. Even the circumstance that a "purpose" could be far more easily moulded and executed in the freer novel than on the stage, which the Censorship was to preserve in a state of primitive innocence (in spite of La Belle Hélène, Pfeiffer, and Judic), could not but contribute to the popularity of the novel: in addition to this the newly flowing abundance of ethnographical material, the descriptions of ranks and classes and of the often complicated phenomena of life, *e.g.*, the Old Believers, demanded imperiously the epical form, even if many photographic scenes resolved themselves into dialogue or directly dramatic shape. What in the forties was present only in the bud now developed itself unchecked. A new stratum of writers of totally different manner of life and conception of life came to light and with it subjects which were wholly unknown to the squirearchical Literature of the pre-reform days. In revenge novels from foreign countries mostly vanished; a "Julia de Valerolle" or an "Alf and Aldona," like those of the late lamented Kúkolnik,

ceased to find either readers or imitators. The men of letters worked upon exclusively Russian, and preferably modern, themes; by this the horizon of Literature is involuntarily narrowed, but it has mostly been the case in all Slavonic countries. To in any way exhaust the tangle of writers or even novels would be quite impossible; let us rather linger over the setting forth of particular pre-eminent performances, and in so doing refrain from naming many not unmeritorious or as yet forgotten names. At the head let us place, as befits rank and age, the last Mohicans of the forties.

Very sympathetic is Grigoróvich. The merit that by a *fable convenue* is ascribed to Turgénev and his "Annals of a Sportsman" was of right his. "I call to mind," Saltykóv justly observes, "'The Village.' I remember Antón Goremýka." That was the first beneficent spring rain, the first honest human tears, and it was by the easy hand of Grigoróvich that the thought that the peasant man exists was and remains firmly rooted in Russian literature and society. Of both tales (1847) Bêlínsky could not treat specially; he only mentioned them incidentally in his literary summary of the year. Both depicted the misery of the peasant. In "The Village" the lord of the manor, because his young wife has not yet seen a peasant marriage, makes without more ado the first girl to hand, an orphan, marry into a well-to-do farmer's family, where the hapless creature is soon hacked to death; he reassures his wife when she wonders at the sad and wretched appearance of the bride by telling her that the traditional ceremonial requires a whole week of tears on the part of the newly-wed. "The Unlucky Dog Anton" fully deserves his name; the severity of the heartless steward, whose name Bêlínsky purposely applies, forces him to sell his last and dearest possession—his nag—in order to pay the taxes, but horse-thieves rob him of him. Here the want and defencelessness of the peasant were directly portrayed, and to such pictures Grigoróvich adhered in his succeeding lengthy novels, "The Migrants"—the caprice and neediness of the squire drive the peasant from one village to another hundreds of miles away, where he can, among strange surroundings, quietly

go to ruin—and "The Fishermen,"[1] a contrast between factory and peasant life. Particular skill was displayed by Grigoróvich, who originally wanted to be a painter, in the landscapes. Quite unpretentiously a third great novel presents itself—"Country Roads," no longer dealing with peasants, but with small squires on these roads, which stretch from the Prussian frontier to the Ural; how in the good old days before Reform people lived there free from care and hospitably, without thought of the morrow, is told with much wit and delight. The parasites and the creditors whom Squire Balakhnóv, whose highest ambition it is to become District Marshal, tolerates round him—instead of paying interest he simply boards the creditors—his journey to Moscow, an antediluvian literary society there, &c., give a perfect pendant to the "Poshekhónia" of Saltykóv. The jovial society, which, to be sure, makes very moderate demands on life, is depicted with much genuine humour, so rare among Russians, only that all roll their eyes too much. After these highly promising beginnings Grigoróvich became silent for whole decades and did not come forward again till the eighties, exchanging his luscious, highly-coloured pictures of village and manor-house life for those of town life, "The Adventurer," "Acrobats of Beneficence," without achieving his former successes; yet the warm heart and the kindly feeling of his youth Grigoróvich retained undiminished up to an advanced age.

No feeling whatever for Nature or scenery, but a more exclusive sense of the ridiculous or harmful doings of those of his class, the nobility of the Provinces and St. Petersburg, in Government employ, was displayed by the bitter, nay, splenetic, pessimist Písemsky. Pictures of unhappy marriages have been his speciality since his *début*, in spite of the Censorship, which did not allow that sort of thing to pass scot-free, as being an attack on the sacredness of the institution—pictures of adultery in its most varied forms; thus he ran ahead of the French, since, though he lived most happily in marriage himself, the whole world seems to him to turn on love, especially when forbidden. His first stories dealt with the same theme, even

[1] An extract in Wiener's Anthology, ii., p. 297.

his peasant stories and his famous peasant drama, "A Bitter Lot." To what temptations are the peasant who comes to the capital after work, and his wife that remains behind in the village, exposed! There are also such titles as "Is she guilty?" and already we hear "Tuez la!" The greatest success, apart from the "Bitter Lot," first came to him from his "Thousand Souls," *i.e.*, the ideal at which the hero, Kalinóvich, aims and which he attains without scruple in the choice of his means, something like Chíchikov. Písemsky at first had a fondness for imitations of a romantic Pechórin, a Byronic hero. Remarkable, however, and not quite called for is the change that takes place in our Chíchikov: at the height of his power and wealth he becomes such a zealous uprooter of all abuses and peculations that he digs his own grave. He was Chíchikov's superior, not in any morality, but only in his great ambition; on the other hand, his prudent, sage, calm prototype would never have been guilty of such breaches of tact. It turned out that the hero of the new tendency, the reforming official, was "just the same 'shchi'" (cabbage-soup), "only thinner," as the old "Vzyátochniki," or baksheesh-people: this negative verdict Písemsky was soon to extend to the whole society of the Reform period, notably to the movement that more and more gave the tone. Personal animosity embittered the conflict, and the "Troubled Sea" of 1862 became a gauntlet flung down by Písemsky to the Radicals; the work itself, the best that he ever wrote, howled down or ignored by the Radical critics, like the author himself, is most vigorously executed and in places is quite masterly. It forms two parts, in the first of which the bringing up, youth, and marriage of Sásha are recounted. At home his doting mother is always whispering to him: "Sáshenka, lad, don't learn—you'll be ill; Sáshenka, lad, eat; Sáshenka, lad, give the stable-boy a licking—how dare he be rude to you!" At the University he fell in love his first term with a flirt, in the second and third he drank out of grief at his unrequited love; at last—nothing stupider could any one hit upon—he became a "claqueur"; *i.e.*, he hissed dancers off in spite of the manager and the body of officers—what was called "upholding the University." To

be sure, even then others cropped up in "Britannia," the materialist sceptic Proskríptsky, precursor of Bazárov, but the young rather dreaded than admired them. All Sásha's good qualities of heart and head were thus lulled to sleep. The second part of the novel dates after 1857. Before the war there reigned everywhere the greatest unrest, even in Nature, which kept making the cholera break out here and there. After the catastrophe the general anger breaks loose, the self-accusations, the pushing forward of petty fellows. The gigantic reform of this agricultural State is conducted by people who do not even know how wheat really grows. Now a Proskríptsky raves as an idol of the young, who are no wiser than those of the forties; the former at least were ashamed of the fact, their successors only rave over a couple of foreign and misunderstood little notions. Advanced girls crop up who start their diaries with denying God and professing free love, when in reality they have hardly shaken a man's hand and weep to God when they have the toothache. The girls of 1820 and '30 read everything, those of 1840 and '50 nothing at all and cared only for dress; she of 1860 reads little and wants at once to put that little into practice with her dirty collar and cropped hair. The older ones, who before '55 found the acme of human existence in the Italian opera, after '57 read the *Kólokol* in private with the enthusiasm of a schoolboy without a trace of mental activity of their own, from which, indeed, the pre-reform period had managed to keep them strictly aloof with a mechanism specially contrived for Russia; they have the one faculty of getting rubbed into them externally what they please. Upon their enslavement by the Government and tradition follows a not less violent and unconscious submission to modern ideas, about which folks rave as much as they once did about verses. Unhappy country, the salt of thy earth consists of clever praters and hollowpates of every kind, ready at any time to fill out their emptiness with anything you please!

And now the accessories to this landscape: the "indicter" Bastardin, a revolver journalist; the Jew Gálkin, the millionaire's son who neighs with delight when any one

accuses his sire of the grossest crimes; the honourable but narrow student who smuggles in the manifestoes from London so clumsily that he is caught and must get his twelve years in the mines—all personages who at that time could be pointed out. And the practical application of all this "apishness"? Is not all Russia reflected in this picture, or at least is not all its lying here gathered together? "It is no fault of mine that our educated crowd is accustomed to do nothing or else play antics, that, leaving out of consideration our most important national power, the good sense, it flings itself on every phosphorescent light as if it were our salvation. In vain will our opponents endeavour to reduce this narrative to a purposeless collecting of various commonplaces; they know well that we hit on our raw places. When we began this task our instinct told us that this noise and uproar and crash were no storm; they were only ripples and bubbles, partly blown up from without, partly rising from the rubbish of every sort that came up from below. Events have fully realised our expectations."

One can easily fancy what an outcry this novel, full of life and equipped with all sorts of interesting adjuncts, had to face. Herzen spoke of the "loathsome" Písemsky. The blowing off of his temper on the Radicals Písemsky paid for with a regular ostracising of his very name. After a longish pause he resumed his activity, without lasting success, as passion had deserted him with his *indignatio*. Even now he treated much that was equally interesting and less one-sided; *e.g.*, in "The Whirlpool" he paid the emancipated Helena all respect for her honest striving for work which should ensure her independence, lend higher aims to her existence, and put an end to female "Oblómovdom" (lotus-eating); like Klúshnikov, he entangled his heroine in the Polish "sprawa" (affair). From this present he reached back into the past to the "Men of the Forties," and still farther to the "Freemasons"; yet his preference was for turning to the contemporary drama, which he transformed into pamphlets and indictments, *e.g.*, in "Times of Enlightenment," as if adultery and deceiving your wife and your mistress with harlots were an outcome of Progress. More

pertinent are his indictments of capitalism and materialism, of the endeavour to get on at any price, even that of decency and conscience, in his "Financial Genius"; in "Baal," worshipped by this century without ideals or hopes, the century of the copper rouble and of sham paper-money; in "Mines," those, namely, which a man lays for his own father-in-law, only in order to secure his position, which he partly succeeds in doing; he ruins the father-in-law, but some one else gets the post. The indictments of the new age, the reactionary strivings, become more intense. In the "Townfolk" ("Mêshcháne") Begushóv declares that he can detect in every foreigner with his own nose the smell of bronze coins, that every one of them seems to him a huckster; he himself, to be sure, knows neither how to live nor how to love any one but himself, though he does know how to fall in war, which he greets with delight in the hope that the knight will make the trader be quiet for a little. All his heroes—the Vikhróv of the forties, Miróvich in "Baal," and so on—are by no means problematical natures, are prepared for immoral, but none the less purposeless and senseless, sacrifices for women who only deceive them. The protest against the age where the publicans drive the Apostles out of the Temple and the power of the brandy-farmers and pot-houses shines forth in all its majesty only loses in keenness through the manner of it; the tirades of his heroes seem very slightly appropriate. Thus the reputation of the Moscow author whom that city alone still helped to successes on the stage declined; a noteworthy, realistic, nay more, plastic, genius exhausted itself. Písemsky remains, nevertheless, a typical Russian—far more typical than Turgénev, for instance.

The "novels with a purpose" of the time directly derive from his work; they fall naturally into two camps at feud with each other, the Radical and the Reactionary. In the forefront of the former stands Chernyshévsky's phantasia "What is to be done?" The work was printed in the *Contemporary* (1863) when its hapless author was already pining in the casemates of SS. Peter and Paul—so one loses all wish to cavil at it. In spite of its weakness as a work of art it left a far deeper trace behind than much that is æsthetically

higher: it was in its day a revelation. The plot Turgénev imitated exactly in "Virgin Soil": Lopukhóv as tutor carries Vêra away from the unworthy surroundings of her parents' house; they marry, but their mutual affection grows cold. On the principle of complete freedom Lopukhóv leaves the coast clear by supposed suicide; Vêra, being set free, follows her attraction to the doctor Kirsánov. She sets up a sewing club on socialistic principles, and gives herself to the study of medicine. Besides the delineation of these free characters, this most vigorously written novel, needlessly interrupted by constant apostrophes to the reader, contains Utopias after the manner of Bellamy, the four famous dreams of Vêra, in which she beholds the future happiness of liberated and rationally ordered mankind; the aluminium palaces of the people, its working to singing, its advance southward, &c. They are dreams, hence they evade criticism. One only wonders—and this astonishment applies also to the modern social democratic Press—how the learned political economist makes the unchecked increase of the human species (for with him the young couples are constantly disappearing in the discreet tents) tally with its material prosperity. Even more astonishing, however, is his passionate, imperturbable optimism: it is touching to see how this innocent victim of official crime, in face of the most terrible fate, rocks himself in rosiest illusions, and does not lose his belief in humanity and the future. He speaks of the "new" men who have freed themselves from all prejudices, who only follow the injunctions of rational egotism; withal he depicts in his hero that ideal which the young had sought in vain in Turgénev's Bazárov, the man of inflexible will, unheard-of mental and physical power, a Titan of knowledge, a voluntary ascetic and sectary at the same time; in the depths of his soul slumber, as in Chernyshévsky himself, æsthetic feeling and delight in sociableness, jesting, and laughter, all forcibly repressed by the doctrinaire. Compared with this novel, written with undeniable talent and in a lofty strain, there sinks into the background the unfinished "Prologue," of a new novel with less clearly defined outlines, although it too contains very interesting matter, rich in the autobiographical

element. Its heroes, the Vólgins, are the Chernyshévskys in person—he at the head of an advanced journal, not because he can write, but because he can grasp matters more correctly than others, a pure littérateur and publicist yet already foreseeing the disaster gathering over his head; she young and rejoicing in life, caring for her husband like a child and withal honouring him so highly; we make acquaintance with Dobrolúbov and other types of those vanishing fifties. Thus he repaid himself regularly for the dryness of his journalistic and intellectual activity, and in elegant propaganda and didactic phantasias opened the way to the "thinking realist," the delight of Písarev. With the success of "What is to be done?"—the "Prologue" became known to very few—no other Radical novel could compare; its sanguine optimism infected others in spite of themselves.

Other novels with a purpose which hailed from the Radical camp did not indeed lose themselves in Utopias, but contented themselves with keeping all possible virtues on the chosen youth whom not even blows could induce to countenance serfdom or the tormenting of animals. In later life he is exposed to trials which he brilliantly surmounts; the more we expect of him, the more modest aims he proposes to himself, so that in the end he becomes as like a middle-class man as one egg to another. Such studies at least are pursued by the heroes of the many novels of Mikháilov (pseudonym of Scheller) which artistically could hardly be placed above "What is to be done?" Scheller also was on a par with Chernyshevsky in this respect, that social, religious, and educational problems closely concerned him, and that he diligently busied himself with the examination of European and American organisations, associations, and sects, as also with a history or Communism. Even the titles of his stories were significant, the "Putrid Marshes" of the first being those of Russian life, which, of course, must be drained; he liked best to give full accounts of people's youth, if possible from their second year; he led us through the Grammar School with its pedantic German formalist Herr Spitzen and his "When I studied at Dorpat," and the inspiring Russian teacher Nosóvich, to the

University with its noisy and Bacchanalian celebrations. He is always talking of the "Ant-hill" of wretched everyday life with its scandal; one hero "Obnóskov," another appropriate name (Obnóski = worn-out clothes) succumbs in this daily attrition; others into whose souls a naval captain named Khlópko has instilled germs of more rational conduct will struggle through no longer singly, but together and hand-in-hand will pursue the "tenor of their way"; unworthy women will obstruct it, yet one frees oneself from them with the beloved at one's side who knows how to value the hero of the day—all is shallow, without salient features, regular to a pattern, and above all, full of phrases. In the colourlessness of his novels, Mikhailov is really less a Russian than a Finn (which he was by birth) but his sentiment is genuine, even when he imitates Petöfi and others. With a similar purpose and not materially greater talent Zasodómsky proceeded to the country and created in his "Chronicle of Smúrin Village" an ideal smith who by his Savings and Loan Banks and his system of sharing profits is to make a terrible end of the unprincipled exploiting of the poor Smúrin nailers by the vicious and loathly manufacturers and capitalists. Another variation was brought in by Bazhin, with a strong touch of the sentimentality introduced already by Karamzín, a falsehood which plumes itself the more in literature the more unknown it remains to the national temperament, which only knows heroes or mockers; informers particularly, to wit, the noble Vigel, are in the habit of being touched with sentimentality.

If the Radical literature was deficient in men of talent, the Tashkenters and Molchálins of the *Russian Messenger*, its High Tory and ultra-patriotic Sipyágins and Kallomêytsevs from "Virgin Soil," or the same Turgénev's Kolázins and Burdalús who without mind or intelligence for anything know admirably how to advance their own cause, the worthy descendants of those Tuzý or "Bosses" under Alexander I. who in the early morning read a page of Condillac, and in the evening went to magnetic soirées at Mme. Svêchin's found no Homer worthy of them. It is true that on this

fruitful field, between drawing-room and office, informers and inquisitors, and hunters of orders, places, and heiresses, there paraded such men as V. Krestóvsky, B. Markévich, and V. Avseyénko, who also as a critic manfully but unintelligently assailed the Radicals with the noble enthusiasm of a Don Quixote, only without his nobility of sentiment. But we do not wish to remove the cloak of oblivion from these still-born productions; we prefer to notice works which combat Radicalism, not in the name of Katkóv's principles, but because the Lêskóvs and Klúshnikovs, deeply disappointed as to the individual champions of the cause and their watchwords, condemned the whole movement as without prospects, a new lie added to the others, without precisely supporting the old patriotic and Tory lies. Even the titles of their works were most significant, "No Way Out" and "To the Knife" in the case of Lêskóv or Stebnitsky as he called himself, and the "Mirage" of Klúshnikov. The latter came first (1864). The hero of his novel was not Rusánov, the representative of the Russian guiding principle, of sound common-sense, but the daughter of a man of the forties, a friend of Herzen and Bakúnin, who in accordance with her father's will throws herself, together with her brother the Revolutionary, into the whirlpool of the movement, a materialist, a Nihilist, and lastly a Nationalist—her brother sacrifices himself for the Polish cause—until, robbed of all her illusions, she confesses that she has seen through the men, the ostensible champions of truth and freedom, as a pack of ambitious creatures that struggle for power, and like vultures tear the entrails of the prey out of each other's beaks; how popular freedom is merely the pretext for setting up fresh tyrants at the cost of the earlier, and how the mask of Nationalism covers the lowest aims. Full of hatred, disgust, and contempt, broken and crippled, without pleasure in life or hope for the future, in London she looks down from her lonely height on all these divagations. Lêskóv's first effort of 1865 differed chiefly from Klúshnikov's in that it pointed the finger at quite definite personages. Here, too, the Socialist idealists threw themselves into the arms of the Polish

Revolutionary party, after having recognised the moral bankruptcy of St. Petersburg Nihilism. Naturally the Liberal Press repaid the author for these personal railleries and caricatures with the fiercest attacks. No wonder that years later he exposed Nihilism most unsparingly in his pamphleteering novel "To the Knife." In talent Klúshnikov and Lêskóv not less than Písemsky quite considerably surpass the Radical and Conservative purveyors of such literary ware; interesting characters, successful, humorous, and still more satirical portraits repay the reader.

From novels with a definite political purpose let us turn to such as are devoted to particular classes and specialities. These special tasks, the depicting of the people and so forth, called quite new powers into action. Literature hitherto had been almost exclusively practised by men of birth, aristocrats one would say according to European notions, which do not coincide with those of Russian, where the official nobility decidedly takes precedence of that of birth; other classes were only represented by exceptions such as the Seminarist Nadêzhdin, the merchant Polevóy, and the petty townsman Koltsóv. Even the littérateurs of the forties, as also the others here named, belong by descent and bringing-up to the squirearchy, or are connected with it like Goncharóv. Hence the predominance of the nobility, of provincial life, of æsthetic impressions, pictures of scenery, the fair sex and love in the older novels, Dostoévsky's excepted.

Reform called new powers into action. Thus Radicalism gained adherents among Seminarists and alumni of religious educational establishments. "They keep these in darkness, feed their minds with dead matter, and as an adjunct beat them mercilessly. The more fiery among them (and some also of the cadets who are not fed at all, only beaten), and those who desire novelty strive with all their might to pass from darkness to light, a healthy, fresh crew that craves air and nourishment, and such as these we need," declares Volókhov to his Vêra. For the first time now, about 1860, plebeians in a solid phalanx enter the ranks of literature, and at once impress a different character on it. In spite of a thirst for

reading and learning which they never were able to satisfy, they are uncultivated, without literary tradition, self-taught, and pioneers. They despise Pushkin and æsthetics, Art for Art's sake, invention, and completeness of form. They contend for unvarnished reproduction of things seen, for full reports long before Zola and photographic exactness. Thus the *rôles* are changed; the novel ceases to be a work of art and becomes the instrument of movements, *e.g.*, for ameliorating the condition of the people. And the matter is changed accordingly. In place of billing and cooing, happy or unhappy, educated and humane, æsthetic and leisured Lavrétskys, Raískys, and Baklánovs (see Písemsky) they introduce above all the peasant; literature by their agency becomes peasant literature, the Nationalist littérateurs treat only of the sheepskin (pelisse worn by peasants, known as "tulúp"). To be sure this is a totally different peasant from him of Turgénev or Grigorióvich, who only appeared as an accessory in fine landscapes, over whose condition one also in the end wiped a tear from the corner of one's eye, but stealthily so that the Censorship should not notice it, concerning whose weal and woe the lord of the manor, or rather, in view of the ever-growing absenteeism of the Russian aristocracy, the ever more heartless steward, had to decide. The "Nationalists" first came to the fore after that February day which for ever severed the connection between the manor-house and the smoky hovels. They depicted the peasant left to his own resources, contending against famine, diseases, epidemics, and superstition, at war with the village usurer, with his own slackness and with inexorable nature, with the caprice of officials and the pressure of taxation, and the whole misery of the Russian country districts before which the peasant flees as a factory hand or journeyman to the towns, the rivers, and railways, severing the natural bonds which held him to the soil, only too often to sink into ruin in the strange surroundings. And side by side with the misery of the villages we have pictures also of the suffering of the towns and their proletariat, not in the "Petersburg Dens" of V. Krestóvsky, who with aristocratic nonchalance adapted Eugene Sue's "Mystères de Paris," but in the narratives of

the proletarians themselves, who with suppressed fury and bleeding hearts set to the most heartrending of strains the poison and the pestilence of their surroundings; for to these disinherited and outcast, humiliated and injured, folks the old aristocratic optimism or pessimism, which at once reconciled themselves readily to reality, were wholly unknown. The strongest protest against society, hatred and contempt coupled with desperation, form the keynote of these angry and heart-rending pictures.

Unhappily, the anger is only too justified. They realise how the frightfully burdensome conditions—conditions the bare possibility of which seems impossible to the foreigner—have often even in first youth or at the clerical school broken and poisoned indisputably great talents, a frank disposition, and a fiery heart, and let loose the thirst for revenge. One, Pomyalóvsky, makes the figures of his tormentors pass before his eye, and murmurs with a voice stifled by hate: "Ye accursed, how I hate you, how terribly I hate you! Ye have poisoned my whole life, shattered my best hopes!" Withal he does not weep; the expression of his countenance is calm, heavy, self-controlled; but the tears stream from his eyes and he is held back with difficulty, lest he should rush forth and try to avenge himself, and it is a heavy sight to look upon this sorrow, on these cold and hardly squeezed out tears. Another, Levítov, confesses: "Now I look with insatiable curiosity, as I have for near twenty years, on the manifold evil of life, and have so far penetrated the sight that the so-called bright sides of life seem to me a sentimental falsehood, which has been devised by mankind to soften as far as possible the inadvertible misery of life. Even I myself see very plainly the onesidedness and defectiveness of my thinking, the activity of which was so long prompted by one and the same sight, even if endlessly distant, of human sufferings. None the less I am by no means disposed to rectify this error because this rough world in which it moved and moves, has entirely driven out of my heart all those evil promptings in following which a man selfishly gathers around him as much as possible of the good things of this world,

thereby increasing the sum of general ill. My body has been welded into invincible patience by the mournful pictures of the suffering world; and the deeper I gaze into their impenetrably dark background, the more there flows into my soul love and gentleness, without whose bright radiance even these pictures would remain dead, animated as they are by the laments of endless ruin from an endless mass of men."

All these writers, with diminishing exceptions, end in delirium tremens, or die of an operation that is not dangerous but which their alcoholised bodies cannot get over; consumption or madness lies in wait for them. One of them, who had no means, in his rage for learning covered hundreds of miles to the University on foot, and was then on account of some folly deported to the far North; there all resistance ceases, there you must begin to drink, escape from the demon Alcohol is there impossible. Another was four hundred times whipped at school, without counting other punishments. Yet another was not so often, but in return more soundly, flogged and lay for months in hospital, and when he was put into a monastery to recover the monks gave the lad a lifelong taste for fiery drinks such as beer fermented on tobacco-leaves. Fearfully heartrending are the things depicted by Rêshétnikov, Pomyalóvsky, Levítov, Glêb Uspénsky, and others, but most heartrending of all are their own biographies, the endless martyrology of Russian Literature.

Rêshétnikov became known through his "Podlipóvtsy," published in the *Contemporary*, in 1864 (he died in 1871), the burláks or "barge-towers" on the Káma and other rivers. This and the succeeding novels are really elaborations of the question, "Where is it better?" as another novel of his is called; so as not to die of hunger, the peasant leaves the thankless soil and seeks a better place, with the "burlaks," in iron and copper works, in the gold-fields, in constructing a railway. The answer remains everywhere the same: for the poor happiness blossoms nowhere. Often they are the same people, the Glúmovs, that he brings on under another name: the Podlipóvtsy, Pila, and his son-in-law *in spe* Sysóyko—but his betrothed Apróska has died of hunger—migrate with their

neighbours from the famine-stricken village. They were the first and most touching picture—he painted it, indeed, to help these poor wretches—of this Gallery of hunger and misery: the defencelessness of the workmen, the extortions of the police, their arbitrariness, how the desire to teach is driven out of the teacher by the authorities, and the victims of drink. A sort of complement from a provincial town was "One's Own Bread," how a girl tries to earn the same, which is regarded as unheard-of sinfulness. She has then to give up even tailoring and goes to St. Petersburg—this second part of the life-story of his own wife he never carried out. The abundance of unnecessary detail, the crowd of persons and biographies, the stilted language, give this lifelike and partly autobiographical material documentary but not artistic value.

If with this reserved, surly son of the North Art was, so to speak, eliminated from his production, it came by its rights with Pomyalóvsky, who, to be sure, was engaged in literature only three years, 1861–63. The hell of the Búrsa, the theological school which he himself had tasted to the very dregs, he portrayed in exceptionally vivid scenes, and the public wondered at the way in which the future spiritual pastors of the people were brought up. If the pictures of the Búrsa by the Little Russians Narêzhny and Gógol had presented it from the humorous point of view, all desire to laugh vanished at the revelations of these antediluvian seminaries, with their code of flogging both among the pupils and in their relations to the authorities. Pomyalóvsky tore himself free at this point from such recollections; far greater trouble did it cost him to get quit of the notions beaten into him there, and to base his new existence outside the priestly caste. The hard struggle for the same was set forth by his "Mólotov," the plebeian who longs for "townsfolk's happiness" and finally achieves it. Pomyalóvsky in his love of truth and objectivity does not soften down the defects of his hero, his distrustful pride and arid hardness. The romantic nonsense about "gold, the despised metal," Mólotov has cast aside and confesses openly to being an "acquirer"; it is now the day of "honourable Chíchikovism,"

once there were higher and purer motives. "Honourably to enjoy life" is the sole vocation of millions. But Pomyalóvsky seems to cherish doubts as to the lastingness and genuineness of middle-class happiness. "Ah, my friends, it is somewhat tedious," runs the closing sentence. Such were the highly promising beginnings. Long before Gorky he would have shown us the cynical "bosyák" (*va-nu-pieds*) whom he studied so diligently in the most ill-famed dens. He wanted to sift the wheat from the chaff in the new movement, to unmask those who under advanced phrases hid the grossest filth; but death interrupted the task, which perhaps might have earned him unfounded suspicion and hatred.

Levítov was a perfect combination of Rêshétnikov and Pomyalóvsky, for his pictures comprised "the misery of the villages, streets, and towns," only that in place of the far north he chose the southern steppe and Moscow in place of St. Petersburg. He is a child of the village, of its idyllic, happy calm. Thus at least the memories of his early youth shed their light on him when he wrote them down in his hell in the far North in grim Shenkúrsk; in the miasmas of the city, in the dens of its poverty and its vice, this child of the village rotted with so many others.[1] We cannot look long enough at his "Sketches of the Steppe," that portraying of the village and notably of the world of his childhood. Everywhere the little heads peep out, curious and excited; the old school with the "diák" (clerk), who also trains birds to sing, the revolution in the village with the new school, all has the freshness of an idyll. We are initiated into the deep superstition of this world, its legends and traditions; Antichrist and the end of the world stand in its midst. The masters are regularly ignored, although details of inhuman treatment of serfs are not wanting. And of other recollections also there is no lack—how the strong man, to wit, tussles with the bear they have made drunk, and so on; nor is there any lack of terrible scenes, such as the deserter in the forest who is gnawed by swine. But we are in fruitful scenery, among simple but "whole" men: and often even storm-clouds that lower threateningly

[1] A specimen in Wiener, *op. cit.*, ii. p. 417.

pass by, as with the supposed wizard Yevsêev and his Sásha, the girl so familiar with Nature.

Otherwise is it in the city, in the Crimea night-restaurant, "where all through the night I mean to contemplate the varied forms of our national misery, silently angered by my warped soul, which sees that it is going to ruin, even as all the folks about it"; in the "furnished apartments," with their half-crazed and half-starved denizens, who live on stolen dogs and the maroons, or signals of fires, to which they hurry in order to steal in the first confusion; in the deserted streets, where the drunken man freezes to death—there the "tainted," nay, already worn and subdued folks are at home, the drunkards who, even when they are quite sober, feel as if they were drunk, and that Death is hovering round them—Levítov's own words concerning himself. "I will seek to call on thee as quietly as possible, poor people! I will sing a song of thee, thou that always vexest thyself, the ever hungry denizen of 'furnished apartments,' as little embittered as my own embittered head has sucked in many embittered themes. Oh! peace to you, men that are bent and crumpled together by overpowering necessity. Peace to your bitterly restless dreams, to your ever-tripping feet that reach nothing; to your constant embitterment I wish speedy rest! For your embitterment is your death. And how hard it is to die in such furnished dens, alone with one's own embitterment even against the day which breaks so brightly into the room, even against the bustling noise of city life which hums unceasingly beyond the wall." One could hardly believe that such a state of mind is consistent with humour, and yet there are not wanting humorous descriptions of Brzebrzicki, the "hero" who only tries to get money for drink, of the young merchant's son who, to the horror of his people, keeps breaking out and being caught again, and the various interesting and numerous attendants. But only too readily humour passes into satire, and that into tears—transitions such as are to be expected with a drunken man. For without spirits there is no scene here; every one is the description of the victims of drink, of the fruitless fight against it, of the yielding to it and the periods of brief happiness, of kindly feelings, and

the fearful results. Albeit these pages smell of alcohol we never feel ourselves disgusted. Bitterness and the envy of others' happiness soon give place to forgiving and melancholy love, and Levítov at the same time embodies the ideal of the best Russians, the gentle sympathy for every trouble and the need to contribute to its mitigation, of opening the eyes of the harsh, heartless children of the world to their duties—without any importunity, without purpose or moral. This alcoholist is by far more tender-hearted than the old amorists.

The highest point in the art of the "Naródniki" was attained by Glêb Uspénsky and Zlatovrátsky, whose very names, like those of the Známenskys, Pokróvskys, and Voznesénskys, being derived from churches, betray their ecclesiastical origin.[1] Glêb Uspénsky (who must not be confused with his cousin Nikolai, also a "Naródnik," who mostly composed and imitated comical scenes from peasant life) reminds us greatly by his strong publicist's vein of Saltykóv; he, rather than Zlatovrátsky, should have taken the name of "Shchedrín, Junior": he recalls him also by his splenetic humour; otherwise their ways do not cross, for in spite of common ideals their range of subjects was too different. Uspénsky began with the misery of the small provincial capitals, such as Túla, with its manufacturing population, and of other still smaller towns where a Volókhov loses himself or is deported; but he soon gets so sick of "sprinkling people's skulls with fresh water" that his own guiding principle resolves itself into "stiller than water, lower than grass," one of the proverbs, *i.e.*, often products from the torture-chamber of humanity, also styled "primitive experience, or wisdom." The "Ways of Rasteráev Street," to which afterwards other sketches were added, treated of the artisans, iron-workers and their dependence, how they are sucked dry by the masters, give way to drink, and lose all balance. When the *Contemporary* was forbidden, the continuation of these sketches had to appear in a ladies' journal,

[1] From *Uspénie*, Assumption (of the Virgin); *Zlatija Vráta*, Golden Gates; *Známenie*, A special appearance of the Virgin and the Icon representing it; *Pokrov*, Covering, Intercession (of the Virgin); *Voznesénie*, Ascension.

and Uspénsky had to wash and comb his drunkards: these hygienic measures did not agree with them. The sketches increased in number, especially the provincial ones about the traffic on the Volga, with the excessive zeal of the Central Police in arresting Nihilists: whoever has read the heroic struggle of the stalwart merchant, wrongly regarded as a Nihilist, with the guardians of order, will never forget the scene, or the quite incredible fertility of Russian in expressions for hitting, and, for that matter, for pilfering too. Splendid humour now and again, but mostly bitter satire, characterised these sketches, and later "Letters from Abroad" (Servia, 1877). But after his return next year, Uspénsky totally changed the field of his observations: he went to the proper centre of the country, *i.e.*, the peasant, and what he there dredged up excited the greatest interest. He destroyed, to begin with, the illusions which had been set up by Slavophiles and Romanticists regarding the peasant, showed the *mir* and the *obshchina* (commune), the supposed panaceas for all social ills of mankind, at work, and how these are obsolete forms, and in the hands of the *kulaki* (sweaters) they weigh down still more the economically weak; it displayed the "intellectual" in his fruitless attempts to acquire the confidence of the peasant, to work side by side with him as the "elder brother," and how for the most unselfish nothing remained but to avoid the country if he would not come to grief morally and physically. This was one side of the medal as Uspénsky had come to know it in Central Russia among the "heartless peasants and their monetary dealings." But he went also to other districts where the connection with Mother Earth was not yet so much loosened by the possibility of earning easily in factories and towns; and here he came to know and portray this "Power of the Soil,"[1] which, at every moment, subjects the peasant simply helplessly to the demands of husbandry, never allows him to brood or to think, and where he, as simply nothing but another natural product, like a tree or a horse, has to adapt himself to the conditions of the moment. The microscopic analysis of this immoral financial

[1] A specimen in Wiener, *op. cit.*, ii. p. 407.

state and patriarchal dependence on Nature, and lastly, of the fruitless attempts of the educated, who, breaking with their past, try to become part of the ordering of the village, and even here only represent the lost sheep that have strayed from the flock, makes up the contents of these singular sketches, which, to be sure, purposely do without the literary form, and deliberately approach scientifically thorough presentment, although the littérateur still trespasses on the preserves of the inquirer, especially in the conflict between the educated and the peasants, illusion and reality.

Unlike Uspénsky, Zlatovrátsky is merely the man of letters, and rises from sketches and feuilletons of "rural" matter to full-blown peasant novels, the most famous and lengthy of which was "Foundations" (1884). But how far are we removed from Auerbach, of happy memory, who, like Spielhagen, once found the most appreciative audience in Russia! Taken at the root also, his conception of peasant-life is pessimistic and fatalistic: his heroes are the peasants who, from some external reason, accidentally acquired cultivation or greater prosperity, making them no longer slaves of husbandry, or through their own energy in separating themselves off from the mass, give up the "bases," and set up for leaders, nay, despots, until at last, pursued by the general hatred, they have to flee or give up all connection with the community. The *óbshchina* (community) and the *artél* (guild) are the ideals of the author, and only within them lies salvation. The hereditary harmony, the moral content and complacency, is destroyed by the thinking, speculative peasant, who wishes to live in a new manner. The *intelligentsia* has lost them and must long to be reunited with the people. These definite ideals lend his novels that bright glow which materially distinguishes them from the pessimistic sketches of Uspénsky; add to this his skill in depicting and painting, in creating whole pictures, as against the mere outlining of most of the other "Naródniki." The novel grows into an epic of village life with a glorification of the depositary of long-transmitted peasant lore, of the ancient *mir* of the patriarch Pœmen and his numerous progeny, with their love of work and division of labour, as in a hive, and set

against these the miller, with his "melancholy," the ruthless and pitiless despot Borís and Peter, not less despotic in the name of Progress, and the dignity of man, a true Reform-Peter, who at last lose all standing in the village and take refuge in the town.

In this exceptionally rich literature dealing with the people—we have only named the most important, passing over the Yakúshkins, Slêptsóvs, &c., often quite original specimens—a quite special position is occupied by Mélnikov (or Andréy Pechérsky), half examining justice, informer and persecutor, half admirer of the people he portrays—in any case an excellent authority on a quite singular world, which embraces millions and is sharply separated from the rest of Russia, the world of the Old Believers and most various sects (*tolkí*). That world had been for a century and a half an inexhaustible gold-mine to the police and to the priests—*cf.* below the merchant's account in Saltykóv's "Idyll of the Day"—and now an official appeared to whom it was to be a literary vein of gold. In travelling about, in trials and inquiries, in official reports and written memoranda, Mélnikov had come to know the Old Believers on the Volga, in the impenetrable forests of Vetlúga, and on the Kérzhenets—the monasteries falling into decay and the nunneries in full bloom, the avarice of their priesthood, the never tiring and almost invariably fruitless attempts at organising them from Austria, a "bishop" being sent for from Lipowane, in the Bukovina; the persecutions, the crimes, the stubborn clinging together, the feeling of solidarity as an outcome of oppression; high moral qualities in individuals, which cannot avert the decay and ruin of the mass; and the threatening indications of the same. Further, the abundance of traditions, the peculiar way of life and character of the various industries and fellowships, patriarchal Russia of the age before Nikon, which learns the Scriptures, not from printed books, but from the old MSS., which crosses itself with two fingers, abominates tobacco, has a lively dread of the Antichrist and Peter the Great as an incarnation of the same, trembles for the welfare of its soul, and makes pilgrimages to

the graves of the self-burners. After some short sketches, Mélnikov chose a large canvas, and arrayed in two novels, mostly with the same characters, "In the Forests," and "In the Hills," 1868–74, on a fairly indifferent string of narrative, the almost endless sequences of his pictures from the *Skitý* and *Tólki* (hermitages and sects). The novel, as such, may leave us not caring whether Potáp allows himself to be deceived, by showing true Siberian gold instead or the cat's gold of Vetlúga—whether his sister "withers" for love of the steward, and her faithful handmaiden vainly seeks love-philters for her; whether his daughter Nástya pays for the same love with her life; or how often that Old Believer, the Moscow "Messenger," succumbs to female temptations; what counts as precious are the pictures of country and people. Here we have the spinning evenings with their stories and songs of a secular nature, against which the devout old nuns protest in vain; the life in the forests, with its legends of eerie beings and treasures. Some of them were hidden by God Himself, revealed to the chosen being, or fallen from clouds and storms, that lay waste all around to the earth, the sun-shaft bearing gold and the moon-shaft silver. The other treasures the devil guards; there is blood upon them, they are accursed, they date from the "liberty" days when the people still "louped" all along the Volga (*Kazak*="louper") from Stenka Razin and his river sacrifice. These treasures are "lifted" with witchcraft and magic spells; there are recordings of them, but let him who "lifts" them be very charitable to the poor and the churches if he would keep his soul from ill. Or the awakening of spring, the stirring of Yarílo in Nature and his resistless power, the Festivals of the Dead in Easter week, when the dead, in response to a summons, come forth from the old burial-urns or "Zhálniki," the reckoning up of feasts and dances—in a word, ethnographical material of the first water, in literary shape. Let us only mention one thing, what the author relates of life in the *Artéi* of the wood-cutters; the guild allows no strife, everything is *unanimously* settled (on the old Slav principle, "Not the majority can decide in face of the

free veto of the individual"), hence often the lot must give the decision; at actual work it is above price, but at its debates very disorderly, as if they were all drunk. No one may be trusted with the leadership, and the decision in everything, else it would vex the others, and would amount to their working as hirelings for a single man. Uncle Onúfry is an excellent manager of the guild, but if he were to be given full power he would at once make himself important, and even if he should behave "honestly," people would not believe it, or obey him as hitherto; one thinks one is reading a report of the Bishop of Merseburg in the tenth century on the deliberations of the Slavs of the Elbe and Ober. The guild observes the strictest decorum and justice within; the stranger it plunders to the best of its power. Yet one more characteristic trait: the editors of the *Russian Messenger*, which issued the novels, observed: "They paint two sets of people; all sectaries are tricked out like virtuous people with ideal qualities, while the Orthodox clergy are drunkard on drunkard, and thief upon thief. Such a contrast forces itself on us as too abrupt; do pray cut down the allowance of spirits and the rascality of our shepherds of souls, abbots and bishops."

With clerics in particular literature had not been allowed to concern itself; now it annexed this province also, notably through the "Cathedral Clergy" of Lêskóv. He depicts a true shepherd of souls in conflict with ecclesiastical superiors. Tuberózov (such wonderful names, Marmeladov, Aprikósov, Benevolénsky, Speránsky, or Jerichonsky the young men often were given at the seminaries because they brought no surnames with them—at home people contented themselves with the two Christian names, their own and their father's) lives for the truth and his cure, which soon makes him unacceptable. For to this day no sort of initiative or energetic action is expected of a Russian ecclesiastic; he is only allowed to be a servant of the Church. He is accordingly barred from free preaching; he may only, as the Orthodox Church mostly dictates, read out passages from the Homilies of the Fathers, together with the admonition against the misuse of alcohol; he is accused of being bribed

by the Old Believers because he only wants to convert, not denounce and plunder them. And Tuberózov has another battle to fight, viz., with his Herculean, boisterous, violent, deacon Achilles, who yet is full of simple-mindedness and the strongest belief; both weed out the tares of unbelief which the atheistic teacher Varnávka—who, to the horror of his old and pious mother, keeps in the house skeletons and parts of bodies—sows among the young; even to-day in Russia schoolmasters and doctors are the "enemies from within," against whom the populace was set on as late as 1905. The catastrophe is at last not to be averted; there fall upon Tuberózov dismissal from his office and the death of his beloved wife; and when the sorely tried man expiates all his trouble with his own life, existence has no more value for his Achilles either, who has lost his spiritual father. Lêskóv attacked still higher spheres, as witness his "Trifles from Episcopal Circles"; in his last years he confined himself to the perfected reproduction of old Legends from the Prologues and Lives of the Saints, and the composing of fresh ones in the old style—Christ as a guest at the peasant's and so on. Písemsky, Mélnikov and Lêskóv are even now not duly appreciated by the critics; they have remained their "Disinherited and Humiliated."

From this digression to Art and the Clergy let us now return for a moment to the work of the Naródniki. Peasant life in Siberia—not that of the "Inoródtsy" or aboriginal tribes, Buriats, Yakutes, &c., but of the Russian peasant, who indeed knew no serfdom there, but suffered all the more from the tyranny and caprice of the uncontrolled courts and officials, and consistent plundering by the village "Kulák" (sweater)—was especially touchingly painted by Naûmov, who was born in Tobólsk and brought up in Tomsk, so had daily witnessed all sorts of punishments. Of the younger men Machtét led off happily with Siberian stories and then vented his hatred of masters and their lackeys and sycophants in a novel of some size, the most didactic portraiture of a Tartuffe in the country. Full of purpose, the idealising of the simple people and its patriotic virtues, and the depreciation of the educated à la Tolstóy were in the end the sketches and tales of Karónin

(*i.e.*, Petropavlóvsky, of the clerical calling, to judge by his name), who being banished to Tobólsk, studied the economic conditions there; Értel, who began with "Memoirs of a Steppe-man" like Turgénev, and in his "Two Pairs," or in the "Gardeníny," set side by side the destructive influences of Liberal views and the harmonious, humanitarian character of a man unsullied by culture—how the former estranges men from the people while in the latter case the moral cohesion is strengthened.

A purpose in the end shows through everywhere; scarcely any are free from it but Mámin, who honestly earned his pseudonym of "Sibiryák" by his persistence in depicting country and people beyond the Ural. But the so-called "Siberian poet" Omulévsky, or more properly Fyódorov, was really born in Kamchatka, and even published "Siberian Tales." Yet not only his novel "Svêtlov," but his poems, "Songs of Life," have nothing to do with Siberia: the former is partly autobiographical, the bringing up and surroundings of the young Radical, the awakening of his enthusiasm, which then infects the reader: the "Songs" are the poetical complement of it, Radical tirades, declamations, and impeachments, *e.g.*, this of the peasant: "If you lie on the stove, one can strike with the axe and yet knock nothing into your head. If you prattle with the wife, there is nothing but bickering and screaming. If you are in the *Mir* (communal assembly), you have swallowed your tongue. If you drive afield, it is: 'Oh! if I only had not to plough!' If you look at your children, you fain would only smite and thrash them: go into the wood, and you look about to see if you do not happen on the Spirit of it. But only be in the tavern and you are quite another man; your speech pours forth like a stream in spring, sense and understanding are yours by bucketsful, and it costs you nothing to stick the devil under your belt!" Surely a "middle-class" poetry, the ideal soaring and hopeful delight of which contrasts sharply with the gloomy career of the persecuted, banished author, perishing in the greatest misery. Stanyukóvich, intended by his father the Admiral for the naval service, also began with "Naval Stories," descriptions of the officers

and crews, full of feeling and humour ; but he gave up that career and became a village schoolmaster, then a political exile in Siberia and wrote didactic novels, also a comedy against the swindling railway concessionaires, but they prevented it from being acted at the last moment.

The most versatile, prolific, and most read of these didactic littérateurs is Boborýkin, who is still untiringly active, and celebrated in 1904 his literary jubilee—novelist, dramatist, critic, theorist ("The Theory of the Novel," &c.), feuilletonist, and chronicler of the day, after first giving up a scientific career as chemist and student of medicine. In his later novels, notably those appearing in the *European Messenger*, the modern development of Russia is reflected most exactly ; every new manifestation, especially within the newly shaping Third Estate, he catches on the wing and at once commits to paper, often in such a way that we can point to them with certainty : he does not shrink from photographic renderings of his acquaintances or of notable personages. The abundance of episodes, of anecdotic by-play and pithy remarks, insures the interest of the reader. He is an unquestioning admirer of the West, more particularly of the French, the Paris boulevards, and their literature ; he has also by no means refrained from introducing the erotic element with true French gusto and frankness as before him Písemsky and Avenarius (in his social novels "An Idyll of the Day," and "Plague," coupled together under the designation "Wandering Forces"), had scarcely done, bringing back the modern Radical movement to the sheer unfettering of sensuality. This one-sidedness vanished later, but there remained the faculty of catching all that is up to date, while yet fresh, and subjecting it to a literary interview. He often undertakes thus to formulate the contrast between the decaying nobility, his *morituri*, and the *resurrecturi* from among the plebeians, *e.g.*, in "V. Térkin," with its study of the Volga landscape and its accessories. These photographic records of society in their various studies retain, if not great artistic, at least socio-historical value, and, together with the liberal aims of the author, have an educational significance.

Such was entirely lacking to the High Tory editor of the

Citizen (*Grazhdanín*, the first Conservative organ in St. Petersburg), Prince Meshchérsky. In opposition to the Tory persecuting Press, the *Moscow News*, the *Day*, &c., which spits upon every human impulse in society, denounces and persecutes, the more madly the more powerless its frenzy seems to grow, he observes a certain decency and restraint, and has acquired no little influence—for in 1904 he refused the post of Minister of Instruction. His numerous novels have found translators despite their problematical value; they are drawn from Petersburg "high life," as their titles "One of our Bismarcks," "One of our Moltkes," &c., proclaim. They are not without a satirical flavour, the one thing that one can say in favour of the otherwise very stalwart "grandson of Karamzín" (in a political sense).

The decline of the nobility, the decay of all the "Nests of Gentlefolk," and "Zatíshia" (Quiet Nooks), the Buenretiros and Monrepos in the country, the invasion of the plebeian without tradition or respect, "Kulák" or merchant, the often scandalous attempts of the gentry to find fresh means for the old *dolce far niente* are depicted in all possible variations, often with documentary exactness, by Terpigórev (by pseudonym Atava, the feuilletonist of the *Nóvoe Vrémya*). Even the titles of the series in which the sketches appear collected are expressive, *e.g.*, the very first which aroused the most attention, "Growing Poor," while in another series "Scared Ghosts," he branded the monstrosities of the old serfdom. To the nobility, the peasant, and the "sweater" who reigns triumphantly over both are devoted the sketches and short stories of Sálov, regular modern sequels to the "Annals of a Sportsman" set down during his roamings through the decaying villages and crumbling homesteads. A speciality is cultivated by Léykin, pictures from merchant life, humorous and very much exaggerated, suited for the stories in the *Strekozá* (*Grasshopper*), telling of the "revels" of the "beards" in carnival time: less good, because dreadfully spun out, in longer novels. Much of it has been translated (into German, *e.g.*, "Our Folk Abroad"); and the foreign reader wonders at these uncouth, ignorant, coarse, good-natured fellows, who with their strong moneybags round

their bodies and their not less strong but more beautiful spouses, in total ignorance of country and people, in childish and simple wandering, get out at Dirschau instead of Berlin, get entangled in the funniest mistakes, at Paris, Monte Carlo, or Rome fall victims to the first adventurer or harlot, get plundered and with cries and crashes, swaggering, and lying the blue down from heaven, appear once more in their promised lands. More interesting are the untranslated works which reveal the secrets of the Gostíny and Apráxin Bazaars, the great commercial houses in St. Petersburg, the practices of people on 'Change and the heads of guilds. Thus has Léykin, who is astonishingly and incredibly productive, who composed, played, and was himself an actor and writes feuilletons and sketches in alarming profusion, secured to himself a subject; his merchants he never tires of leading through all exhibitions, seasons, festivities, and countries much as Stinde does his Buchholyes, and bringing them into collision with constables, thieves, &c.; for the most part he aims only at tickling the risible muscles and the author never shrinks from the coarsest circus drollery.

Almost insufferable length also handicaps the effect of the stories of Márkov and still more of the endlessly prolific Nemirróvich-Dánchenko. Both have properly earned themselves names as writers on travel, Márkov as a critic as well, the latter as a war correspondent from the "War-year," 1877, on to his Letters from Manchuria in 1904. Both have seen many lands and peoples and depicted them, and particularly that first-rate correspondent and journalist, Dánchenko, who first by his descriptions drew general attention to the far north, Lapland, the Monastery of Solóvki. He is also the author of excellent sketches of military and peasant life, and his "Christmas Stories," because of their humane purpose and touching contents, would deserve translating much more than his novels. Márkov endeavoured in his few novels to urge on the educated what he himself did, viz., to abandon illusions and in daily duty, as a doctor in the country or otherwise, right oneself again and acquire a not thankless life-task. The exceptionally numerous works of

Dánchenko, just like the older ones of Akhsharúmov, have no aim save to amuse unpretentious readers with romantic complications, melodramatic effects, and skilfully tangled intrigues. Here we have the modern, *i.e.*, very much watered down, Marlínskys, quite indispensable as feuilletonists to the daily papers. Akhsharúmov, indeed, belonged to the Old Guard of the forties, and with him may be mentioned Avdêev of the same age. The latter at the beginning of the fifties fluttered all the girls' hearts with his "Tamárin," a new moulding of the hyper-romantic Pechórin. The fluent story-teller succeeded in the same thing at the beginning of the sixties with his "Reef"; his speciality in adultery and conjugal separation soon lost its attractiveness, while his last novel, "In the Forties," was devoted to the schools of Bêlínsky and Herzen. Avsêenko and Golovín (calling himself Orlóvsky) are *raconteurs*, after the manner of Meshchérsky, their collaboration on the *Russian Messenger* deciding them. Both, though High Tories, did not hesitate to give by no means flattering presentments of the Conservative circles, whether belonging to the bureaucracy or high society.

The historical novel also found new recruits; for a long time it had been almost wholly silent. Zagóskin, Lazhéchnikov, Kúkolnik, and Zótov, with their at times fantastic inventions, such as the latter's "Mysterious Monk," *i.e.*, the ex-Hetman Doroshénko, the supposed *spiritus rector* of Russian history to the Battle of Poltáva, and so on, had, notably during the noise of indictment, found no successors; even Turgénev and Goncharov placed themselves at the service of the day. Only the two Tolstoys, Alexêy and Lvov, asserted their right of always thinking differently from the rest and worked on, undisturbed by the hubbub around, the one at his "Prince Serébryany" (*vide infra*), the other at "War and Peace." But even these performances, never surpassed, only slowly created fresh ground for, the somewhat ambiguous Art. A historian of repute, the Little Russian Kostomárov, endeavoured to give a literary version of Sténka Razín's days and Ivàn IV.; but his strictly historical

renderings of the time of the troubles, or Bogdán Khmelnítsky, are far more interesting than his sham historical novels, of which the first, "The Son" by its dryness of style, the other "Kudeyár" (the foundling and robber captain, ostensibly a half-brother of Ivàn IV.), by its fantastic character prevent us even from properly appreciating the archæological exactitude and conscientiousness of them. The stone had been set rolling: now Danilévsky made himself popular. His historical novels are properly the last phase of his authorship. He began in the early sixties with new ethnographical matter, depicted life on the South Russian Steppes, in all its unrestraint like the old American Texas or Kansas. Thither the discontented peasants fled from the terrors of serfdom at times to fall into still worse —for, being outlawed, they were at the mercy of all sorts of adventurers: "The Fugitives in New Russia," "Return of the Fugitives," and "Freedom." After a long pause came "The Ninth Wave" (*i.e.*, the mightiest; other peoples count the tenth such), again broaching a rare subject, Orthodox nunnery life. A rich mother has in order to expiate her own shortcomings taken her daughter to a nunnery as the bride of Christ; such cloistered life is not the real basis of the novel, the heroine of which oscillates between love and her vocation; the proper hero is Vetlínzin, Member of the Zémstvo, or Local Government Board, with his selfish or disinterested entourage, who after his great and energetic performances in Asia cannot get used to petty surroundings. It was only at the last that Danilévsky turned to the historical novel of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries: he was interested by the petty cabals of a Miróvich with the unhappy prince Ioann languishing in Schlüsselburg, the supposed intrigues of Princess Tarakánova, of which she had never dreamed, and the very real ones of that pseudo Peter III., Pugachóv, and the "Black Year." In "The Burning of Moscow" he competed with "War and Peace," so far with success that he placed in the foreground what would have been an abomination to Tolstóy, the patriotic woman, forgetful of her sex and fighting in the ranks of the warriors against the invasion. At the same time another historian, Mordóvtsev, turned his hand to novels, preferably

drawing them from the past of the Cossacks and Little Russia, "Zahaidáchny," "Tsar and Hetman," and reaching back into the fourteenth century for "Mamái's Battlefield." Much greater success than these often greatly spun out novels attended, in 1874, the "Pugachóvtsy" of Count Sallias de Tournemir, a son of the Countess who wrote as "E. Tur." The Count, who enjoyed a most excellent literary training, came forward early with Tales and Travellers' Letters from Spain, and spent exceptional labour on this novel in the conscientious study of archival details and the topography. It has also undeniable merits; peculiar to it is the transference of the conservative models of fiction to the eighteenth century, the contrast between the national hero *sans phrase à la* Katkóv and the—one had almost said—Petersburg Nihilists with their manifestoes and their criminal complicity in the Polish cause—for Polish exiles are the true seducers of the innocent Russians, set up the Pretender, poison Bíbikov, and so forth—so that the Count combated the "Cause" in his novel, as the Countess, the Warsaw Pompadoursha,[1] was to do in reality. The success of the work settled the matter; since then the Count has furnished many volumes of historical novels, "A Million" (*i.e.*, Potémkin's end), "The Counts Orlóv," "The Poet Derzhávin," "A Son of Arakchêev," and so on, but without the conscientiousness and carefulness of his first work. His laurels would not allow the eldest son of the well-known Moscow historian Soloviov, Vsévolod, to sleep, so that he compiled a crowd of historical novels, ranging from the "Princess of Ostróg," 1876, without a break to the "Voltairean." In addition to these, other purveyors manufacture such patriotic and historical sausagemeat for all possible magazines. Aloof from them stands the poet, critic, and essayist D. Merezhkóvsky, turning to other times and men, author of the "Death of the Gods; or, Julian the Apostate," the last Hellene on the throne of the Cæsars, and "The Resurrection of the Gods," a biographical novel treating of Leonardo da Vinci[2]—

[1] Saltykóv's cant word for the wife of a Governor, in this case Gúrko.

[2] He, as the embodiment of the Renaissance, was made the "forerunner" of Antichrist, but Peter the Great, who is made to do duty as such

very respectable performances, both translated into several languages, and evidences of deep study, familiarity with the respective ages and their ideas, but in the execution somewhat colourless and dry.

One word more concerning literary ladies. The brilliant example of the great Empress and her one time patroness and subsequent favourite, Princess Dáshkov, for a long time remained unfollowed. Women prominent in literature, such as Princess Volkonsky and Mme. Svêchin, were renegades from Orthodoxy; as yet the old dependence weighed too heavily on the world of women in Russia. We have mentioned individual poetesses, but it was the novel, especially that of love and the family, that first set many women's pens in motion. Yet in Russian fiction they have so far by no means attained to the important part which fell to their foreign sisters, such as Orzeszko or George Eliot, not to conjure up the name of Sand, which means so much in Russia; their successes have been far more modest. Yet let us mention just a few names and works. The first place belongs to Mlle. Khovshchínsky, known by the pseudonym of Krestóvsky, not to be confused with V. Krestóvsky, the author of "Petersburg Dens," nor with his daughter, M. Krestóvsky, also an authoress who, after smaller attempts, made a successful *début* with the "Lady Artist." Living in a provincial capital, Mlle. Khovshchínsky confined herself in the first of the novels that since 1850 have appeared year in, year out, to mournful family stories, the oppression of loving beings by loveless and tyrannical mothers, the tyranny of society, its ridicule and scandals, and the tyranny of men; less convincing were the definite heroes. In time her scope widened, and she tried to depict modern women and men; she has never got rid of her pessimism. Among the moderns she draws by preference, as in part Boborýkin does also, such as have turned their backs on their ideals, or only adhere to them in words, hypocrites of every kind, if not open renegades. Everywhere her humane

in the third part of the trilogy ("Peter and Alexis"), scarcely answers to the idea of the first two. The trilogy has been translated for H. Trench. Constable, 1902–7.—Tr.

sympathy with all outraged, persecuted, and broken existences shines through and wins the heart of the reader. Far less prolific was Madame Sokhánsky, alias Kokhanóvsky, who stood revealed as the most energetic of Slavophiles. The novels of Madame Vinitsky and Madame Shapir move within the grooves of the feminine novel with ready-made heroes of scanty individuality, with the poverty of their contents, and the insignificance of their ideas, and this must take the place of a very detailed psychological depicting or analysis of the heroes and their sentiments. In the most recent period we find, as with their German sisters, such a realism in the portraying of amorous concerns that their brothers of the calling must retire vanquished. More original and more manly is the talent of a Dmítrieva, a woman of the people, the daughter of a serf; peasant subjects with social colouring, without the prevalent eroticism of lady authors, are her province. On the borderline of two literatures, the Little and the Great Russian, once stood Márko Vovchók, as Maria Markóvich called herself. The Russian, or more properly Little Russian, Beecher Stowe, began in 1859 with Little Russian peasant sketches, translated into Great Russian partly by herself and partly by Turgénev—sentimental idylls and horrors from the days of serfdom, a flaming protest against the slave-owners and enthusiastic apology for the slaves. As the question occupied all and the protest outdid all, even Turgénev and Grigorióvich, in forcibleness, the success was exceptional; people overlooked the weak points of her fantastic and unnatural pictures. Just for that reason the success could not be lasting; to-day the memory of Vovchók still lives only in Little Russian literature. Novels and stories of the educated circles which she wrote later in Russian did not rise above mediocrity and are equally forgotten.

More interesting than all these authoresses who never rose above most modest mediocrity (not even Madame Hippius, now Merezhkóvsky) are two typical Russian women, Sónya Kovalévsky and Maria Bashkírtsev, little as, in spite of their great gifts, they may have to do with Russian Literature—the one a scientist, a Doctor of Göttingen and Professor of Mathematics at Stockholm, who longed so vainly for love, the other

the rising artist, both writing partly in other languages. Whoever is interested in the way in which February 19th[1] and its manifesto were received by gentle and simple in the country, how Volókhov seduced Vêra, and how she followed that Nihilist to Siberia, should read Mlle. Kovalevsky's "Female Nihilist," in her introduction to the story of Vêra. She describes herself. But more interesting, touching, and tragical than anything these women wrote was what they experienced and felt, to which Mlle. Bashkírtsev in particular has given such thrilling expression. Thus moved at length the wings of the Russian helpmeet, of the deeply gifted Slav woman, who is far more repelled by the shallowness of modern life than her Teútonic or Romance sister.

[1] The date of the Great Liberation.

CHAPTER XVI

SATIRE. SALTYKÓV

The satire of the sixties—Saltykóv's first attempts, Sketches from the Provinces—How his voice has become the chorus of contemporary Russian tragedies—His enforced silence and taking refuge in pure literature—Separate works—The history of Glúpov—From the domain of moderation and exactness—Contemporary Idylls—The "Old Days of Poshekhónia"—The "Messrs. Golovlóv"—Significance of his satire.

THE liberation of literature from its muzzling by the Censorship was bound, above all, to give free play to its satirical tendency. This healthy trait of the Russian character was borne by the most characteristic of the older creations, the satires of Griboêdov and Gógol. Around them were grouped smaller works, which, of course, before 1848 might only treat of harmless matters such as the absurd Frenchiness of Mme. Kurdyukóv, ridiculed by Myátlev in Russo-French verses. With the new era satire ventured into the domain of "Indictment." This "Indictment" literature under every form—the novel, the drama, and even poetry—became the fashion, attacking in particular the dishonest bureaucracy, and *vzyátka* or baksheesh; thus Count Sologúb again appeared on the field with novels and comedies against the *Chinóvnik*; particular attention was aroused by the "Dramatic Trilogy" (of which only the first part, the "Marriage of Krechínsky," came on the stage), by Súkhovo-Kobýlin on all the abuses and malpractices of the old Courts. In "middle-class" lyrics, Rosenheim tried his hand on satirical elegies with loud applause; he brought genuine satirists into the field.

The progressive literary critic of the *Contemporary* was not content with reviews and discussions; the success of Rosenheim awakened his own love of mockery; he established in his review a special satirical portion, the "Whistle" ("Svistók"), in which, under the name of "Konrad Lilienschwager" and others, and with collaborators, he cultivated bitter satire in verse and prose. The choice of the objects for this satire was very striking. It did not attack, say, Reaction or abuses, but turned especially against the Liberals, Rosenheim and others, though, indeed, it did not spare Pogódin and his famous Varangian controversy with Kostomárov. People have complained of Dobrolúbov's partiality; his voice was only that of the Radical enthusiast to whom the whole Reform movement seemed to adopt a suspiciously slow step, and who was afraid that society, proud of what it had attained, and of the fine phrase "We have reached ripeness," would allow itself to be satisfied with trivialities. Wherefore the Radical combated this lukewarm, half-hearted Liberalism. The "Whistle" of the *Contemporary* was soon outbid, especially after Dobrolúbov's early death, by the *Iskrá* (*Spark*) of the poet Kúrochkin, the admirable translator of Béranger, and the caricaturist Stepánov, which regularly set up for a pendant to Herzen's *Kólokol*, only it of course cultivated the petty scandal of the day, and notably of the provinces, and ruthlessly ridiculed everything and everybody. Its prime was, however, shortlived; prosecutions by the Censorship, the enforced uniformity, and the ebbing of the waves of protest and progress undermined its popularity soon after 1866; its place has not been taken since. The long-lived comic journal *Strekozá* (*Cicada*), beside Léykin's commercial pieces, concerned itself more with the *demi-monde* than with social or political phenomena. Feuilleton writers, such as Suvórin, Burénin, Astronómov, and Doroshévich of the *Nóvoe Vrémya*, became popular satirists, especially the second-named, who, following the reactionary trend of the day, made a mock of the few Liberal gains, such as trial by jury, in his "Dead Man's Bone," but favoured literary satire, and never tired of ridiculing the decadents. How narrow literature has become, what slender

claims are made on it, is most plainly seen by satire; for to what do all the men of to-day amount, compared with their gifted predecessor Saltykóv, who for a quarter of a century followed and gave point to the evolutions of society, though the Government, of course, was out of the game, being safeguarded by its Cerberus, the Censorship?

The most spiteful of all writers that ever lived, one of the greatest satirists of all time, at the same time a literary genius of the first rank, is the Russian Swift, Michael Saltykóv. The Censorship has him on its conscience, for three-fourths of his career was occupied with the anxious question "Will they let it pass?" During the last quarter the answer was invariably "No!" But all the greater was his delight when they did pass it. From this arose the necessity of writing much more than would otherwise have been necessary in order that if they struck out half something might still remain; then the need for rewriting, for carefully wrapping up everything trenchant in ever so much wadding so that the Censor might not scratch himself; the need for a special diction, the language of the East and of slaves, of allegories, proverbs, and apologues, the inventing of a special terminology, and hence the necessity of attacking, not what needed it, but of fastening even on the innocent, and following them with gnashing fury in order to compensate oneself for the impossibility of speeding the right word to the right spot.

Saltykóv's satire is thus dreadfully diffuse, repeats itself and loses itself in quite generally conceived complaints and descriptions. It requires you to make a regular study of it, and use a commentary; it is thus often quite antiquated and cobwebbed. The new generation mostly reads it no more, and if formerly many turned pale with fury at the mere mention of the name, we could to-day not easily find a writer of equal consequence who is equally forgotten. To be sure, all his works do not share the same fate; certain of them will be read as long as there is any literature, and deserve to be enrolled among the literary gems of the world. Much that was quite original he was not able to carry out at all, *e.g.*, the correspondence of

Nicholas I. with Paul de Kock. In view of the number of his writings we refrain from naming all; we shall mark the various decades of his activity with the help of some few specimens. His satire changed materials and colour. It was never political or personal, but concerned itself with the "middle class," from which the "Pompadours" or Governors, "Molcháliny" or officials, and, in Griboêdov's phrase, the "Tashkenters" or pioneers of Russian "civilisation" in Warsaw or Samarkand, at Merv or at Riga, the orators and authors, the correspondents and pleaders, are recruited; as also the bank and railway directors and the usurers, especially the "sweaters" in the country who bleed the peasant, compared with which serfdom was a joke. It concerned itself with the city of Glúpov, or "Foolsham," *i.e.*, Russia, and its simple denizens, only careful of their quiet, where even during that building of the Tower of Babel, the French Revolution, only the dogs wagged their tails and turned over on the other side. It fought against Glúpov's idleness and heedlessness, its phrases and hypocrisy. It laid bare the arbitrariness, the unrestraint, the total absence of abstract conceptions, such as country or law, the open search for pleasure which only asks for the means of gratification and never whether it is allowable. It destroyed unsparingly Russian illusions, "how far we have got on." It has nothing in common with the moralising satire of the eighteenth century—the author expressly guards against that. He never speaks of the vices of which moralists treat periodically, in which people indulge, forcing their way into rooms with paragraphs of the law over their doors, for which later the Procurator hands in the bill, assured that it must be checked by pence and farthings, vices such as only attack rascals, blockheads, or people in a hurry to get on. He discusses only the vices of which the public does not know whether they are such or virtues, which alter with the age, which the conscience holds as such. Literature must hold with conscience. A moralist, for instance, will always call the purloiner of a penny a thief, but conscience and literature might declare it a want of conscience to take the penny away from him. He believes in the terrible power of "abstractions"; only in accord

with them can human life acquire regular and safe bases: "Do not stifle in the 'details' of the present, but foster within you the ideals of the future, the rays of the sun, without which the earth becomes stormy. Look often and carefully at those shining points; only to the purblind can they appear wholly severed from all reality." There is no repudiation of the past or the present, but the result of the best that the former bequeaths, the latter moulds, and the while enlightened thought prunes away all that is bad or dark. He was the voice crying in the wilderness. At times society really seemed to enter on the paths of belief, but soon mists bedimmed every ray of light.

Saltykóv's satire is of unequal value; much of it is only written for the moment—newspaper stories with humorous details, simply meant to tickle the risible muscles; polemical essays of dreadful bitterness, against Dostoévsky to wit, and real or supposed opponents, those that became such owing to a misunderstanding about Nihilists and Chernyshévsky with the *Russian Word*, where "they did not know their own friends," something like the simultaneous attacks of the *Contemporary* on Bazárov. They are to-day rightly forgotten, *e.g.*, the productions of the time of his employment on the *Contemporary* when he meant to propagate the "Svistók." We do not always identify ourselves with this satire or its standpoint, although we would never agree to the favourite and convenient rejection of his "zuboskálstvo" (sneering, mockery), his useless ridiculing of everything and anything for the sheer sake of scandal or mockery. In particular cases he may here and there have struck the wrong note, especially in his early years, where he really seems to laugh for the sake of laughing, but not later, where his satire grew to stately and moving tragedy, where neither he nor his readers had any inclination to laugh; for Saltykóv or Shchedrin, as was his pseudonym for decades, did not at once hit on his predestined way. Long ago, when a pupil of the Tsárskoe Seló Lyceum, he had, of course, felt himself bound to walk in Pushkin's footsteps. When he gave up poetry, like Dostoévsky, he

wrote stories of the life of the poor, who are so foolish as to die of hunger in fertile Russia, and that in the midst of ideologues. No objection was raised to these stories by the Censor, but that by no means made him safe. On Kúkolnik's representation (so did the noble Romanticist avenge himself on the "naturalistic" school of Gógol and Bêlínsky), one fine morning the tróyka, with the gendarmes, appeared before the abode of the civil servant at St. Petersburg, and carried him off to Vyátka. Here he was able to follow the traditions of Herzen, who had been deported there ten years before. Buturlín's terror again did an inestimable service to literature. The young Government Councillor, who had himself risen to be a Pompadour, now made acquaintance with the patriarchal provincial life of the pre-Reform days. What he saw and experienced he set down in "Governmental Sketches,"[1] which, when it was again possible to write, appeared in Katkóv's *Messenger* in 1856–57. They gave the impulse to the abundant reforming literature of the following years. We are present at the burying of the good old times—a few more snapshots before they vanish for ever. The officials with their extortions, the statistician demanding of the peasants the number of the bees, not hives; their formalism, as when a document comes in, and even the Archivist does not understand its contents, yet he is able to answer at once; the provincial capital, with its awful, crushing monotony, its illuminati; the Krutogórsk Mephistopheles, who has designs on the dear children, who then break out in the drawing-room with "My papa has none but stolen money." Another has brought from the University nothing but æsthetic impressions, the conviction that Art alone is the only true life, and that all else is mere accident. Then we have the prisons, with pictures quite in the spirit of Dostoévsky, who did not issue his till some years later, only that there is no lack of humorous details, as witness the inspector who is convinced that London is at the mouth of the Volga, and that there is a whole nation which only makes hair-washes (he had used such, only they

[1] Sketches of a Government (*gubernia*) or Province. Pompadour = an official of high rank.

had made him grow horse-hair). Then lastly the people, pilgrims, Old Believers, and the extortions of the officials again, how even among the former immorality begins to show itself. The whole is somewhat strongly spiced and seasoned work such as Saltykóv later evaded. It made his pen-name celebrated, however much Turgénev might turn up his nose at the like.

In his satire of the sixties the literary element again comes to the fore, especially in various stories of the days of serfdom and the martyrology of the peasants. The provinces are also again brought on. Reform leaves much to be desired. To be sure, the old abuses, all sorts of stories of "Revizórs" vanish, but otherwise all remains as before—how the provinces treat a Volókhov, how in that Patagonia the liberation of thought seems quite useless. Other general themes are touched on which later would be set forth more in detail. As Glúpov and its people are mentioned repeatedly, the author cannot resist the temptation to enter into the past of the city, and in opposition to the official chroniclers, write a satirical history of Russia. This is the "History of a City according to the Original Documents," unique in the world's history, ostensibly the jottings of four City Archivists, which extend from 1731 only to 1826, for by 1825 the possibility of even city Archivists writing ceased. Of course it is no history, not even a satirical one—that is, one in which definite facts and personages are kept apart. Several "heroes" melt into one, while *vice versâ* one is split up into several, and also the date limits are illusory, for the history comes close down to our days. In it, too, generalisations of the Glúpovite character and the nature of the civic chiefs are the decisive point. Later on, in his *Contemporary*, he furnished a supplement to it, "The Founding of Russia": the Varangs are called in so that the hitherto unorganised murdering, plundering, and burning may be brought into a system, Góstomysl asking in vain what the advantage of it may be. The three brothers come over and dream the first night of the consequences of their undertaking—the invasion of the Tartars, the Moscow Period, the period of the Free Companions, of the

appointment of Governors and Procurators. Two brothers at once prefer to hang themselves in horror, while Rúrik lays the matter before the people, and is encouraged in the words, "Just spit on everything which later will be taught in schools as history!"

In delightful imitation of eighteenth century Russian the first Archivist begins his record: "Are not in sooth highly famed Neros and Caligulas, radiant with magnanimity, found in every country, and should we alone not be able to find such among us? Nay, every village even possesses its Achilles radiant with magnanimity, appointed by the authorities, and must have them. Ay, only look into the nearest puddle, and you will find in it an insect which in its heroism excels and puts in the shade all the other insects. . . . Our city, too, is built, like Rome, on seven hills, on which when there is *verglas* carriages and horses go to smash, but in Rome heathenism shone, with us piety. Rome was infected with arrogance, we with gentleness. In Rome the common people raged, with us it is the authorities. The historical period begins with the cry of the first prince in Glúpov, 'Thrash to death,' while No. 8 of the civic chiefs utters only two cries, 'Don't allow it' and 'Destroy.'" This phonograph gets destroyed, however. The period of troubles is put an end to by Dvoekúrov, who establishes the Academy in Glúpov, not to spread but to try the sciences, so that useless ones may not be propagated instead of good. Among the following let us mention Benevolénsky-Speránsky with his code of laws, *e.g.*, "Every man should go about carefully; the brandy-farmer has to furnish the gifts.' In the Bill for the Proper Baking of *pìrogi* or pasties, it runs, 'Be it forbidden to make pastry of dung, clay, or building materials,' and so on. Next the head-hanging Grustílov with his 'Pfeifersha,' *i.e.*, Madame Krüdener (but even before that Alexander I. had been presented as Mikaladse), and her mystical evenings: 'Awake, brother . . . I am the same maiden that thou sawest in the free city of Hamburg with her candle out.'"

He rises to the level of grotesque tragedy rather than comedy in the description of the last civic chief, Ugryúm

Burchéev, *i.e.*, Surly Bear, who is ostensibly Arakchéev with his military colonies. No doubt it is he, but he coalesces with Nicholas I. in the figure of the man who would fain put Russia into uniform and barracks, and turn the stream of enlightenment away from Glúpov. Saltykóv's fearful hatred for the system is apparent in every turn. Burchéev sets up a phalanstery—we are in the sign of Fourier, you know—and all live in couples in barracks, while the sciences are banished, counting is taught on the fingers, and the reckoning of the year is abolished, as there is now neither past nor future. Two festivals, at the beginning of spring and in autumn, are introduced, one of preparation for the coming troubles, the other in memory of those surmounted. They differ from ordinary days by extra marching. Everywhere spies are on the watch ; otherwise everything is in common and at the word of command—work, meals, and all. The women may only bring forth in winter, so that their summer labour may not suffer by it. The ultimate aim is the barrack, fanatic worship of the straight line, of the levelling of everything, of marching in one direction. And then the magnificent closing picture, the fruitless erection of dams to turn the "stream" and the wild, dumb despair of the Tsar.

That it was not mockery or caprice that guided this pen is clear of itself. The phalanstery was only intended, but the reality was not more consoling. Burchéev, the narrow-minded and short-sighted, with the steely, idealless eye, keeps staring straight before him. Outside the radius he took in the Glúpovites might have been able to breathe freely and even talk aloud and go about ungirdled ; but the silly creatures at first, after the manner of all Government-mad peoples, crept constantly under his eyes, and hence came about numberless conflicts and repressions. Quite unjustly Burchéev received the nickname of Satan ; if you asked the Glúpovites why, all they could do was to tremble. The result of their history is bewilderment, and the history of these bewilderments is just what the Archivists relate, and that not in jest. One often gathers from their words a commiseration for the people,

which elsewhere is wont to be absent from an historian's pages. On the one side works organised strength; on the other stray the poor creatures and orphans, and are always being unexpectedly fallen upon. The mutual relation is expressed in the formula, "'With what right do you thrash me then, sir?' and he only retorts in my teeth, 'There's your right!'" a woful tautology, where one box on the ears is only justified by another. The good people of Glúpov are at bottom like others, but their qualities are overgrown with such a quantity of parasitic atoms that nothing can be seen. We hope everything from the future.

Particularly striking is the martyrology of Glúpov's Liberalism, Radíshchev and so on. The first, Yónka, collected aphorisms for a book "on implanting virtue on earth," for which he was bound to the stake, and disappeared "as only those that care for Glúpov's weal can disappear." Then Iváshka died in fetters because he taught that all men must eat, and that he who has much to eat should share with him who has little. Later the three and thirty philosophers were scattered over the earth because they taught that he who works shall eat, while he that does not work shall enjoy the fruits of his inactivity. The highly-born Alósha Bezpyátov had only caused the unwritten natural laws to be observed, for which he died of the judicial examination, the terror, and the pain. Lastly, the teacher of calligraphy Línkin's turn came because he taught that, whether beast or man, all die, and go to the devil's grandmother. The trial of Línkin and the false witnesses are classic. Does he but try to open his mouth in justification every one roars at him, "Stop, pest! wait with the opening of thy jaws!" "Shut his jaws there; see how eloquent he is!" To end up, his own defender arraigns him, nay he arraigns himself. Such was the monument that Saltykóv raised to the humiliation and obfuscation of the people, especially of the Nicholas period! The allusions, Decembrists, Bêlínsky, &c., are often transparent, but more important than all these particulars remains the general delineation.

After 1866 the horizon darkened visibly; there was no

longer any opportunity to ridicule the Glúpovites for their phrases and illusions ; new people were now to be watched at work. The gentry, now without serfs, squandered their compensation and pressed forward to the State feeding-trough, the peasant drank away his last money ; now the usurers flourished, and soon the wheat of reaction was in bloom. Saltykóv portrayed these doings in all forms : first, the state of things above, the doings of the Pompadours, a portrait gallery of all possible personages, such as "the Doubter," who learns to his astonishment that there are laws ; but if so, why do they want Pompadours ? So he goes among the people and convinces himself that they, too, know nothing of a law except the laws of Nature, as also the prevalence of a *planida* or planet-destiny : "This day red, to-morrow dead." He calms himself at last when he hears "Away with it!" *i.e.*, the law. Another understands by the decentralisation of Russia the freeing of the Pompadours from law and trifles which only hinder them in carrying out "home policy." The self-conscious Liberalism of a third first becomes melancholy, and then proceeds to action, to conflict, without any special occurrences compelling him—only according to the old system such would have been needed. At the close old Liberals gather round him and do penance for their divagations, Lavrétsky because since 1861 his estates bring in but little, Raísky who wants to become an equerry, so as not to vex grandmother, and so on.

The Pompadours alone can do nothing ; they have beside them as auxiliaries the army of officials, "the atmosphere of moderation and exactness." A special series of sketches is devoted to this host—the Molchálins of all species. We are living in a woful age. The best are troubled by but one desire—to flee, to disappear ; every noticeable making of acquaintance can compromise you badly in such days, some in the eyes of the Present—many a life is merely a ceaseless struggle with the police inspectors—others in those of the Future ; for it is, after all, not very flattering to go down to History with an

ugly nickname, and History is notoriously pretentious and troubles even Senecas and Galileos. Can one find many Galileos among us, say in the Koltovskáya? And now the whole career of a Molchálin is depicted, an epic without compare; how he must set about it to find the necessary 'shoulders'; how he has to tame that refractory horse, his superior; how, to begin with, he must give up certain tokens which belong to the image of God, since there is in them a kind of silent reproach, criticism such as the "indispensable folks" will not endure; with one spitting Molchálin extinguishes the small set of sparks which he still possessed. The most wonderful sketch is "Molchálin No. 2," dedicated to the Radical editor of the Radical journal *As You Command*. His whole life is one fever. His ruin is begun by his leader-writers; they start writing about a new kind of manure exportation and yet find their way to Siberia. Yes, and not only they, but there is something also for the accessories, the harbourers, and non-hinderers; then he heard himself called renegade at every corner, and so between hammer and anvil he in three years acquired the finest of heart diseases. The scene where the two friendly Molchálins, the official and the editor, put together the articles for a number and "improve" them is unsurpassed, as, for instance, the leader-writer who says: "Our contemporary advocates the bare principle of autocracy; we venture also to recommend the co-operation of the nation within honourable and modest limits, because the former if left to itself may lead to destruction" (which is revised into "the former cannot lead to destruction") "as some circulators of converse opinions think" (which is put in as a precaution) "but affords a basis of indestructibility." Besides this, "*oppressive* whole" is altered to "majestic," and so on; only the article on "materialistic doctrines" is totally rejected as impossible, to the greatest grief of the editor, for how many subscribers might he not have gained merely by "materialism" being mentioned without the accompaniment of the vulgarest abuse? At last it becomes the turn of the feuilleton and correspondence. In the

St. Petersburg sketch mention is made of "our future statesmen" who are preparing for their career by running after the train of every disgusting light o' love. For "statesmen" the two at first substitute "Nihilists," then because that does not do, "pleaders." Lastly the story-writer scents "the monster, the insatiable that lives on peasants' tears. If it shows itself in the village, all crackles down in fire, in the fields the wholesome herbs wither, in the herd the good cattle fall"; this is altered into: "They scent the radiant, God-sent angel. If he happens upon fire-engines, buckets and axes spring up around; if upon drought, the bread reserves of the Local Government grow out of the ground; if upon cattle disease, the veterinaries come crowding forward." They have thus retained everything and only observed the law of chiaroscuro. In the same way it appeared from the correspondence that we can only trust to "God will help," which is altered into "The necessary measures are being taken," and (it is added): "We need not despair, for there are still some places which have not burned down or been a prey to cattle plague, and to be sure they, too, are in God's hand." This loyal mood is only marred at the end by the words: "Brother, it seems to me as if we had spent these last two hours" (of work on the paper) "in a sewer."

Thus the Molchálins prosper famously, yet they too have their Achilles tendon, the children! Here begins the true Russian tragedy, which to be sure must not be written. Saltykóv comes back to it a second time, "the sore place." The true, irreplaceable official is dismissed because the new Pompadour wants to explode the legend of his indispensability. He now only clings to his son, the student, with an ardent love which he deserves and returns. But the new ideas of youth soon bring about more and more alienation. The son has a horror of the father, who has only carried out his orders from above and furnished the legal instructions for the attempts of Major-General "Desperado"; the young man escapes the choice between filial love and his sense of duty by suicide. "What have you done?" cries the horrified mother to the father just as on the day that he was

dismissed. And what if the children forget themselves? The shorthand reports of the political trials say nothing about the crowded mass of fathers and mothers whose hearts are bleeding and whose eyes are blind with weeping. Yet Saltykóv declares that a Russian tragedy is inconceivable, because in the first act the catastrophe follows directly on the exposition—for to be sure the authorities keep both eyes open. Saltykóv deceived himself utterly. Nowhere are there such genuine tragedies as in Russia or such true heroes. If their literature cannot speak of true heroes, if it must at most cast side glances at these successors to Harmodius and Aristogeiton, who impress us far more than those of "belauded antiquity," as is done in some chapters of "Resurrection," if it must pass over in silence these wondrous martyrologies, which can compare with the old Christian ones, all the sadder for literature. But let us ourselves follow its example. For a moment fresh occurrences turn the attention from internal tragedies, which were but just impending, and which in the years that followed down to the present were to attain such dreadful dimensions.

We are, be it known, in the war-year, 1877, and Saltykóv makes his correspondents write reports which could not be bettered; but Russian humour at once takes a tragic turn—on the one side weakness and defencelessness, brutal caprice on the other. And if the one speaker becomes indignant over the Glúpovites who put up with all this, the other declares that they not only waggle their ears over it, but bleed away. They are not to be judged by that. "Either you are a man or an ox under the yoke. No, there is another alternative—man under the yoke quivering with dread lest he may be swallowed up any moment. We have, indeed, in our monotonous one-act life no tragedies, but our being so accustomed to constant tragedies (the plot has hardly made a start when an order comes and the curtain falls), our moving about among open tragedies, is assuredly tragical enough—it is better not to think of it. I knew a man who was as merry as you please as long as he realised nothing; when he did realise, he at once hanged himself.

One who does not understand will also not drink himself to death; often it is impossible not to drink oneself to death."

In the provinces the same tragedies prevail. The nobleman now slips into his Monrepos as into a coffin to die quietly. This quiet is envied him by the peasant, whose life indeed is of such a kind that even the authorised painters of hell, the Súzdal daubers of saints, would have found no colours on their palettes for it. Even now the face and back of the peasant represent extraneous objects on which every man can put his signature with his own hand. We are repaid for this by the story of how one peasant fed two (civilian) generals. Being cast upon a desert island, they are meaning to eat each other, although the island is swarming with provender, but as they know such only in a dead state they do not know how to make use of the creatures when running or swimming. Then they find a peasant asleep, force him to provide everything, even the rope with which they bind him for fear he should run away; at last he actually brings them back to St. Petersburg to their housekeepers, gets a twopenny-halfpenny tip, and all through the time they have abused him for sponging on them and what not.

The same "Collection" contains also the celebrated "Loss of a Conscience," how one palms the inconvenient find off on another and the consequences it entails on each. Shmul Brzoski engaged with his family in reckoning up interest gets out of it the easiest, sends the thing in an envelope with a 100-rouble note for charitable purposes, and devises in return that very evening a performance such that by the next morning everybody is calling out at it. The conscience, tired of constant roaming, at last beseeches a petty townsman: "Seek out for me a Russian child, open his pure heart, and put me into it. He will let me grow up together with him, then mix with people with me at hand, and before his great conscience will disappear all injustice, arbitrariness, and intrigues, because the conscience will no longer slink away shyly, but be determined to manage everything itself."

With this optimism contrasts sharply the tragic "Funeral" of the journalist, true to his convictions, who does not feel himself at home among modern vermin, and keeps sinking from his leading position like a girl in a flash house who at first amuses the public but when the roses of her cheeks have faded is sent out for beer. At length he dies, and the Literary Fund, having convinced itself that the deceased was no habitual drunkard, pays the expenses of the funeral. The service is held in the chapel near the Censor's office, so that at least on this occasion Censorship and Press come together. The porter is just carrying in a bucket of red ink—"unjustly shed blood of Russian authors." And the reflections on the fate of the writer culminate in the piercing cry, "No one supports us; reader, Russian reader, protect us!" And then comes the comparison with the old days, which yet had their good points. Saltykóv, like Herzen and Pushkin, is proud of the purity of Russian Literature, to which moral outcasts like Bulgárin and Gréch did not belong. Thus no native poet celebrated the accession of Nicholas I.; Frenchmen and Germans had to be hired for the purpose. This unsulliedness of their Literature was first lost in recent times.

In other ways also this old period was not quite to be despised. Now Russians are divided into well and ill disposed. Formerly there were only the first; abnormal growths were at once cut off: the till-robber went to Siberia, and he who let his hair grow long to the guard-house. At that time there was nothing but marching, and as each man marched of himself, the poultry thieves, *i.e.*, officials, did not ferret about much, only raised the contributions, and the rest of the time drank without being sober. Now when heart and reins are tried, one catches oneself nursing the absurd idea that mere marching would be preferable. How fares it then with Saltykóv "Across the Frontier"? His heart was of another pattern from that of Turgénev. Only once did he seek the south, but when the sun there poured over him his heart only bled for all the starvation spots and scenes of fires and pestilent corners at home. He could recall no minute when this heart did not strain towards

Russia, for Love has its own logic, the more painful the better. There follow here the most inspired words that Saltykóv ever wrote, how to one his country is the most unbearable grief, gnawing, pressing, killing the man ceaselessly; to another the carrion cast forth to be torn to pieces by him and other masters of blood-sucking. Cornet Progorêlov ("Broke") lost because he himself was once master of serfs, and in spite of his enthusiasm for Granóvsky and Bêlínsky, has crept out of his den for nothing and nobody, glad only that he was left unmolested, appeals in the name of all other lost ones of the forties to the Future, and develops the opposite of Country that attracts, the State which binds, Authority which commands; the first says "Live," the State "Live and obey the Law," the last "Live, but await directions and confirmations." [1]

"Across the Frontier" contains delightful humour, drastic satire, and deep thoughts, such as the dialogue between the boy in breeches, the German, and the one without breeches, the Russian, with the keenest penetration into national psychology; other dialogues, with the two Councillors, with Capotte the *laquais de place* and spy, and so on; intermezzos that remind one of Léykin without his insufferable length—the delineation of the Russian "new speech" of which Literature babbles so much without knowing it, while you need only stoop to pick up fresh words that are strange to foreigners, *e.g.*, the Search for the Prime Mover; or, What is that to you? and the like. But when abroad, away from the watchful eyes of Authority, the Russian chances on by-paths, and dreams such a terrible dream that the next morning he journeys straight back home. He dreams, that is, of the "triumphant hog"—a scene between him and meagre Truth in her classical garb, *i.e.*, naked. The unattractive female does not suit the hog; he roots at her; she defends and excuses herself as she can, but among the neighing and bellowing of

[1] This means that the serf-owners who were liberal in the forties were only too glad to lie quiet during the reforms of the sixties, lest worse should befall them than financial ruin, which, when reaction came, made them crawl out of their holes and clamour for official billets made to support needy nobles.

the public the hog puts an end to her. The ostensibly comical scene is most highly tragical.

His dream came true; at home the snouted beast had indeed triumphed. During his whole literary career he had been a drowning man catching at straws; now that these are removed he must sink. In 1884 his pride, to which he devoted his time and strength, *Notes of the Fatherland*, which he had edited since 1867 with Nekrásov, was to be forbidden for ever, which meant a dreadful blow to him. He and his friend Glúmov now seek to save themselves. Warned by Molchálin, they wish to bring themselves once more into the best odour with the local police, give up thinking and speaking, only take Katkóv's paper, and offer themselves to all testings of their principles—at the constable's wish Glúmov marries a former mistress, while at the "trying of the heart and reins" they answer the question, "Is the soul immortal?" by "We must go back to the sources. If there are paragraphs or regulations by a high authority on the point, we must guide ourselves by them; if not, we must wait for further regulations on the point." The new couple undertake a journey in the provinces, the dangers of which are depicted; they give themselves to the gathering of statistical data in the villages, *e.g.*, under the heading "Food"—"The inhabitants would be disposed to it, but have no means for the purpose"; "Trade"—"This is in nails and boards which are taken from their own huts, all to drink away." But even the continuance of this loyal journey becomes impossible, thanks to the growing mistrust of the authorities. On their return they are brought to trial, acquitted, and edit the *Dung* newspaper, with leading articles on the Abolition of Thinking. There intervene in the process the finest experiences and episodes, such as that of the merchant Paramónov, whose biography consists of nothing but accounts—"total, 1,167,465 rubles, 77 kopecks, of which 15 kopecks are for the Pushkin Memorial at Moscow": the remainder has flowed into the pockets of the Heads of the Police and others, for the Old Believer has had to pay for a quiet life. Or that of the journalist, one of the *Purified*, with the tariff on his face, for verbal insults

with and without mention of parents, and for practical insults, the smearing of the face with substances that may not be handled in the day. For into pure Literature—it had till now been secluded in a magic palace from all contact with vulgar reality—there now intrude either the Nozdryóvs, the "historical" people, so called because every moment there are stories about them, those of the revolver press, or the lavatory writers, who were prepared to end their lives there, and whose time is now come. Quite fragrant, as befits the spot, and with the voice of the growling there habitual, they now threateningly ask the folks who have the impulse of self-preservation, "Why are you pleased to look so irritable when it is every one's duty to look cheerful?" Such Retirádniki were the spokesmen in the *Moscow News* and in the *Russian Messenger* of Katkóv, the "right honourable" (he was once an Anglo-maniac), inventor of patriotism and autocratomania. He was helped by the "converted," *e.g.*, Sásha "the unintended," who, as a boy of thirteen, went out to revolutionise a village, was imprisoned, and out of terror denounced five hundred people, among them his own mother—but in those days some people did actually reap what they had sown. At last this contemporary idyll, with its mephitic vapours, breaks off. What Turgénev urgently advised, the "great novel with groups of characters and incidents, a leading idea, and a broad execution," Saltykóv himself did not write; we must put it together out of his uncounted sketches, which he published first in the *Contemporary*, then in the *Notes of the Fatherland*, and finally in the *Messenger of Europe*, and collected in various series.

When the present, with its "Trifles of Life," whose destructive influence a series so styled delineates, weighed more and more unbearably upon him, the weary old man turned to his youthful memories, no bright or gladsome ones—those days of serfdom and the keeping up of the "full goblet" at the expense of the peasants' backs, the "patriarchal" but thoroughly immoral family life, of mental indolence and political indifference. Thus arose the great and moving picture "The Old Days in Poshekhónia": "What I have

described is like to hell, but it is not invented by me. I can lay my hand on my heart and say, 'True to the original.' . . . In the evening of life the desire for exaggeration is lost; there comes the invincible longing to utter the truth and the truth alone. When I made up my mind to revive the picture of the past, which, though still so near to us, yet daily sinks in the abyss of oblivion, I took my pen, not in order to enter into controversy, but to bear witness to the truth." It is thus a family chronicle, yet without properly autobiographical material, which the weary author has not brought to an end in his haste to hurry to a conclusion, but which makes clearly recognisable the good old times, with their total degeneration through slavery, all most valuable material for Russian social history from 1820 to 1850. Country and people are depicted—the winter *razdólie* (lavish life) in the hospitable manor-houses, for which, in face of the unproductiveness of the country, the last drop is squeezed out of the peasants, who swarm about the fields in constant toiling—the remote district predestined, as if by Nature, for the mysteries of serfdom. The servile mass is delineated: the pious Ánnushka, who bids them bear the "masters" as a cross: "only so can we dark folks" achieve the heavenly crown; the bourgeoise Mavrúsha, who has married a serf and cannot resign herself to her position and hangs herself; the squires; the good-humoured, the frivolous, jovial District Marshal Strúmikov, who ended as a writer in one of the "flunkey-towns" on the Rhine or in Switzerland, and who has "Comedies" daily played before him by an impoverished gentleman, the imitating of beasts' cries, or questions and answers, as "Why have you let your beard grow?"—"Beard is a substitute for eyes. Those that used to spit in them now spit in my beard"; or else, "I am a creature of God, clothed in skin and covered with matting, at a distance nothing special, the nearer the more loathsome," and so on—thus approximately ended the Verétiev of Turgénev's "A Quiet Corner," for whom Másha drowns herself. Then we have the life in Moscow, the centre of the non-official nobility, where the gamblers found their clubs, the spendthrifts their *traktirs* (inns), and gipsies with their dances and songs, the pious their

churches, and the well-born daughters husbands, through licensed matrimonial agents ("Svákhi"). From this background stands out the family, with its up-bringing physically amid bad air and food, without coming in touch with Nature or the country, morally only immoral, denouncing and spying, flattering and the like. As to religion, quite external—prayer being only the expectation of obtaining what one prayed for, its gospel only a fixed portion of the Church ceremony; yet in it quite unheard-of words were dropped, the hateful slave-nomenclature ceased, and germs of human conscience took root; lastly, the individuals, the parents, brothers and sisters, and more distant relatives, who were only appreciated from the point of view of inheritance.

The history of such a family of the good old times Saltykóv had written many years before. These are the "Messrs. Golovlóv," perhaps the darkest picture of morals in all literature, painted wholly in black, without a single brighter touch. Characters in "Poshekhonia" and other sketches are repeated from the "Golovlóvs." Hence we are justified in altering the chronology this time, and first mentioning at this point a work of 1872. "There are families on whom Fate seems to weigh. You recognise this particularly among the gentry, which, without occupation or connection with the rest of life or importance, at first in the days of serfdom felt itself very much at home throughout Russia, and now, without that rampart, withers in crumbling homesteads. At times a stream of luck suddenly outpours itself over such a family; the Pucks come to its rescue, especially in our days, which require fresh people. There are at the same time families to whom, from the cradle up, unevadable misfortune is promised. On a sudden there fall on the family, like an itch, quarrels and vice, and devour it from all sides." In the course of three generations the family passed through three distinctive stages—idleness, incapacity for any kind of work, hence the idle prating, the emptiness of thought and heart; and lastly, the inevitable conclusion of the general entanglements of life—drinking oneself to death. The decay had been checked by the meteor Arína Petróvna, the

energetic housewife and she-tyrant, hated by her husband and feared by all ; but she bequeathed her energy to none of them. Hence this collection of powerless beings, drunkards, pitiful reprobates, mindless idlers, and rapscallions generally, produces an even worse posterity, culminating in candidates for death with evil juices in them, who must succumb at the first pressure of life.

Of such a kind is the family of Golovlóv, its centre being Yúdushka (Jude), the blood-sucker as his own mother calls him, the Russian Tartuffe. After the catastrophe to his brothers, suicide and delirium, he lives with his mother and her grandchildren, having got hold of the whole ancestral property. His mother submits to her fate, while the granddaughters flee and sink lower and lower, till one poisons herself, while the other has not the courage for it and goes back to her uncle a drunkard. Then Yúdushka wraps himself more and more in a fantastic hermit-like retirement. He is at bottom not even a Tartuffe, such as they have to be in other countries, hypocrites as to religion, as to family, as to property. "They do not drill us so, but let us grow wild like sting-nettles in the hedge; we are wholly free, *i.e.*, we vegetate, lie, and thresh straw on our own account." What is better? Conscious hypocrisy arouses ill-blood and fear, unconscious lying only vexation and disgust. Yúdushka guarded against everything disturbing or exciting, and was sunk above the ears in the slough of the details of the most disgusting self-preservation. His existence has left no traces; it is like a rain-bubble which bursts. Such people have no friendly relations, for common interests would be necessary for that; no business ones, for even in matters of dead officialdom they only display complete and insufferable fixity. Withal he is greedy of gain, low-minded, without conscience, and mendacious, and at last gets the habit of drinking from his niece. How the two vex each other with reproaches! how the dead regularly issue forth from the old house and all its hated nooks, from the father in the white nightcap, who shows his tongue and quotes the pornographer Barkóv! Thus their life becomes an impossible torture, till one Good Friday

a conscience awakes in him. "They must forgive me for all, for myself and those that are no more. What has happened, then? Where are they all?" He is found stiff on his mother's grave before Easter Sunday.

Wounded to death by the prohibition of his magazine, Saltykóv began to fade away, though he submitted with apparent calm to the inevitable. This "promptitude" was, indeed, nothing new to him: "I had so used myself to it that I did not even ask if it would slay or pardon me. But till now it had an intermittent character; there were several forms of it, one of which counteracted the other. It was not easy to steer one's way among them, but with a certain habit one could divine much, and that meant 'seize the moment.'" The game was not moral, but interesting. Now, on the other hand, "promptitude" has abandoned its swervings into contradictory purposes; it has become unique and unchangeable and sufficient to itself; the moments are done with, there is no longer any "seizing" them. Now, slowly, all bonds begin to snap. Kramólnikov, the Radical author whose very name—Kramóla = plot—is a proverb as a firebrand, remarks how he has become superfluous, compromising, and hated. People can hardly wait till this outcast gives up the ghost. He yet takes his leave with a collection of "Fairy Stories," beast and human stories, among them those of this very Kramólnikov. Some could not pass the Censorship and were printed abroad, *e.g.*, the story of the "Eagle" (Russia's heraldic emblem)—how out of wantonness he introduced the *sciences* into his realm, how he had himself instructed by falcon and owl, and how the process ended for the teachers, for himself, and for the 'crows' (peasants), who, one fine morning, flew away. Here every word is a blow of the whip to the Autocracy, and Górky's allegory of the storm-bird compares very lamentably with it. Others no longer attain to this height of the "Eagle," of the immortal "Triumphant Hog," which also should belong here. Very interesting is the defence of "the Poor Wolf," who is not to blame that Nature has made him a robber, and the condemnation of the "Idealist Lady Carp," who would fain advocate harmony among fishes, and during her tirades on

virtue (though she herself devours snails) is swallowed by the pike. As opposed to this despairing pessimism, the "Christ's Night" (*i.e.*, Easter night) and the "Christmas Story" give play to a triumphant idealism. Christ is arisen; He pardons, consoles, strengthens the poor, who fall on their knees weeping, and shows the wicked their conscience. Here Saltykóv finds liberating, redeeming words; here the shrill, piercing discord of his pitiless, pungent satire comes to a close in harmonious strains.

Russia is thankless to her great sons. One of the greatest, at least one of the most original, and at the same time most typical, every inch a Russian, was Saltykóv. He, too, is repaid to-day with undeserved ingratitude. True, we must not here forget the rapidity of Russian progress. Even Bêlínsky dwelt on the fact how often five years in Russia mean as much as fifty elsewhere, so speedily did men seek to catch up the West, which for centuries had been hastening in advance of them. No wonder, therefore, that in Russia men, works, and movements so soon grow old, and that one feels inclined to exclaim again and again with Chatsky, "The tradition is still fresh, but it is with difficulty folks believe it!"

CHAPTER XVII

THE DRAMA

Ostróvsky and his plays from the "Realm of Darkness"—His "reforming" plays—Desertion of the stage and composing of historical plays—Return to the modern stage without further decisive successes—His school—Other playwrights—Potêkhin—Historical drama—Tolstóy and Avérkiev—The modern stage.

As yet Russian drama had no original physiognomy. Quite isolated, and in no connection with each other on the stage, stood "Wit Comes to Grief" and "The Revizór." On the stage itself reigned the Vaudevillists, the translators, the purveyors of romantic and patriotic plays—Kúkolnik, extolled by Bulgárin. Repertoire and delineator were tuned down to the farcical or the pathetic key. A change was first worked by Ostróvsky, who by tireless activity won for the stage its independence. An element that in life itself was all but dying out by his means breathed life into the Russian stage.

Literature, upheld by the nobility, had hitherto, as far as it dealt with realities of Russian life, busied itself exclusively with that class and the official class which was recruited from it. Below the nobility and officials stood the merchant class, protected from all foreign competition, hence petrified in a traditional self-importance, an element devoid of culture—nay, adverse to it—in views of the world and men, in manners and customs entirely adhering to the antique, pious, simple peasant traditions, rough and uncouth like the peasant, but far more corrupted by the pursuit of gain, estimating a man, like every trader, only by his money, while never asking the

source of that money, devoid of scruples or conscience, and exulting over the success of the more crafty or powerful; honour or soundness in trade was replaced by the more convenient principle, "If you do not cheat you will not sell"; ruthless towards those below it, and only caring for its own advantage, defects of character and self-respect were made up for by brutality towards relations, dependants, and the weak, and servility towards those above it. In the name of tradition it clung firmly to the patriarchical order or disorder of the Domostróy, the household economy of Iván IV's times. Children and servants were objects on which parental caprice or that of the master of the house might experiment. Even when the husband really loved his wife the "plétka," or whip, for her hung on the wall, for she too was only a slave like the rest. It was only as a girl that she enjoyed freedom, could run about out of doors, sing, and dance. To a married woman all freedom of movement was impossible, but she might then as mother or mother-in-law repay those around her with equal tyranny. This peculiar "Kingdom of Darkness" Ostróvsky brought upon the stage, this kingdom of collisions and catastrophes between old and young—for already we have resistance to arbitrary power—what the old marvel at as "modern vice," something unexplained and as yet unknown, between rich and poor, who are also assuming the rights of men, to the indignation of the money-bags that are furious at such insubordination; between the representatives of traditional arbitrariness, who only become more repulsive when they dress in modern fashion, and the victims abandoned to them without defence.

The tone and views of this circle Ostróvsky knew from his home life, as his father was attorney to Moscow merchants, and from his official employment at the Commercial Court. For the theatre itself the University young men had always been enthusiastic, and vented their æsthetical and often sole interest in constant visits to the theatre and noisy ovations. The "natural school," that of Gógol, advocated the representation of the actual surroundings. Thus came into being the first scenes and pieces which, to be sure, did not at once find their way on

to the stage, but partly by print and still more through readings aloud, of course in select company, made the author's name and the unaccustomed matter known. For the present both matter and manner did not get beyond Moscow. First, in 1847, we have "A Family Picture." A merchant, by the caprice of his declining years, wishes to marry a girl, and her brother accepts his suit, seeing that, for one thing, the prospect entices him of being able to cheat over the dowry, and next that the trader is a pleasant, steady man, kindly disposed in his cups. The succeeding comedy went deeper than this careless one-act piece, "It's in the Family: We'll get Quits" ("The Bankrupt"). The merchant Bolshóv will not satisfy his creditors, and declares himself in liquidation, after handing over his fortune to his daughter and son-in-law, in the firm conviction that they will not leave him in the lurch. But the loving couple are of opinion that they should enjoy the possession of it undiminished, and fob off parents and matrimonial agents, for these still operate exclusively in concluding every matrimonial alliance, with nothing. The parents start on the road to the debtors' prison, while the son-in-law thus addresses the public: "We are opening a new shop; pray favour us with your custom. Send a child to us without fear; we shall not take advantage of him by a doit." On the stage the thing was impossible; the whole merchant class would have protested against it as an outrage; even in print it evoked objection.

Buturlín's Committee, which knew no laws, only moral instructions, took steps to inculcate that the aims of talent were not only caricature and the delineation of the ridiculous and the bad, but also the triumph of morality upon earth, and the author altered his ending accordingly; the son-in-law also is cited before the judge, and a prospect of Siberia opens before him too.

The success of the piece as recited and afterwards (in 1850) printed was an exceptional one. Yermólov and Odoévsky received the impression from it that it was not written, but born spontaneously, like the fungus which forces its way up

from unwholesome soil. Even this early piece exhibits all the features of Ostróvsky's talent—an absolute naturalness, a realism not to be surpassed, a wonderful perfection in very simple diction, and the truest replica of the whole surroundings, without a single false touch.

The next comedy made a digression from merchants to Moscow small bourgeois and officials. The "Poor Bride" must sacrifice her youth, her beauty, and her cultivation to an old and rough yet "steady" official; the young people that hovered round her were windbags, and did not think of eventualities, or sought in her their own moral stand-by. Of the peculiarities of Ostróvsky a fresh one was here revealed. His plays, like life, have no conclusion, but only present an episode, in which the real characters either reveal themselves to us under their usual mask, or a marked change takes place in the heroes, the consequences of which are beyond ken. For the moment the bride is dragged as a victim to the slaughter, but in a couple of years perhaps Benevolénsky will be the one to be pitied. In other plays of his this deliberate want of clearness as to the subsequent course of things is much more plain—they only claim to be pictures from life, and that in its development is often not to be reckoned on. In the following plays—for they are mostly such, no comedies in spite of their designation and the optimism of the playwright, who decidedly prefers a happy ending, often only to be brought about by a *deus ex machinâ*—Ostróvsky goes back to his merchants and shows the first intrusion of new elements into the exclusive caste. These elements only bring about new confusion. We have the cavalry officer, who before he must settle his debts, makes an attempt at marrying for money the daughter of the rich merchant, and seduces the girl and leaves her in the lurch when the old man shows himself inexorable in the matter of dowry. There is a merchant who, in contrast with those of his class, makes a display of his culture. This consists in doing away with the traditional usages and songs, in laying in new-fashioned furniture and dress coats, champagne instead

of Madeira and the home-distilled fruit liqueurs, and of a butler in white thread gloves instead of a maid or a lad in a jacket. Now for the first time the word *samodúr* is made current. "If a man listens to nobody, stamps his foot, and cries 'Who am I?' then his housemates must all fall at his feet, else something dreadful will happen." His trembling wife soothes down the "samodúr" with: "Dear man, no one ventures to insult you; you insult every one." Another type is that of the lazy youth portrayed as Balzamínov in a whole trilogy, "Sunday Sleep before Dinner," "Our Own Dogs are Biting Each Other—Don't Let Another Come In," "What You are After, That You'll Get." "He crawls into the service and will serve a whole week, but not a year. Look you, he cannot do it; he has not the wit for it; he has learnt his lesson ill. Idleness was born before him, and he would fain play the master at all hazards. He calls this a need; he has too much taste, and could not live in poverty with it. Now he makes all roads and paths unsafe. Perchance he might find a foolish woman with money." So speaks his mother, and this is what "Lucky Jack"—Balzamínov—so naïve in his boundless stupidity, succeeds in doing, after some false starts finding the right woman, a rich merchant's widow, fat to impossibility—we are in the East, where a lean woman would be an abomination—and correspondingly stupid, lazy, and a prey to boredom. Assuredly the portentously stupid Balzamínov hit it better than the abnormally clever Prézhnev, in "Incompatibility of Temper," who also brings home a rich merchant's widow, only after the wedding she fastens up the money-bag tightly: "In our mercantile circles it is not the custom to give away money." True enough, for do they not even dock the journeyman on the pretext, "It matters little to him, while to me with so many people in the course of the year it means quite a considerable sum, and what weight shall I carry in the world if I am left without money?" What Prézhnev will do we do not learn.

Side by side with this we find digressions into the past, pretty superfluous except where the harshness of the conventional (im)morality was to be glorified. A wife, shamefully deceived

by her husband, flees to her poor parents, but these, on the strength of their poverty or morality (?), drive her away. "Whom God has joined together"—*i.e.*, what the marriage-mongeress has coupled, &c. The *deus ex machinâ* this time sounds the Easter bells and brings the prodigal home, but for how long? There are not lacking official plays of the reforming type—*e.g.*, the "Lucrative Post": a young and cultivated official, devoted to the modern watchwords of honour and uprightness, is forced against his will and convictions by his pretty wife, who is prompted thereto by her relations, to ask for such a post, which requires a man who combines a hatred of all "University men" with sycophancy towards superiors and corruption. Lastly, he tries his hand at the life of the squirearchy, and unrolls a gloomy picture. In "Adoption" the tyrannical lady of the manor marries Nádya, the orphan she has brought up, to a drunkard. The girl at first believed she was a human being like others, but when she realises that she may have no will of her own, and will find no protection, desperation takes possession of her: "What has become of my fear, of my modesty, I do not know. Let it be only a day, so that it be my own. What will come hereafter I do not care to know." She yields to the squire's son, who pays court to her; but this dishclout, like other young men in Ostróvsky's pages, cannot protect her against the fury of his mother, and drives away. Will Nádya end in the moat? We cannot guess.

Ostróvsky rose to his highest level in "Storm,"[1] which the Radical critic Dobrolúbov greeted in 1859 as a "Sunbeam in the Realm of Darkness." He hardly did so quite justly, for it is merely shown that even in this motionless world, with its dead morality and living lawlessness, men of feeling are possible, though they expiate their different natures even by death. Katharina has been brought up in an old-world, strictly religious, household, among simple and affectionate surroundings. Marriage transfers her to the house of Madame Kabanóv, loveless and domineering, who keeps her son under an iron rod, tyrannises over her daughters-in-law, and anxiously

[1] Translated by Miss C. Garnett. Duckworth, 1899.

guards house and appurtenances against the "encroaching decay of morals"—*i.e.*, the loosening of the ancient tyranny. As a male counterpart to her struts about the merchant Dikóy, the "wild," who is best depicted in a scene with a simple, radically honest, small tradesman named Kulígin, who asks him why he is *pleased* to insult a decent man, to which Dikóy retorts: "After all, do I owe you an account? I give none to people more important than you. I wish to think thus of you, and I think so: To others you are a respectable man, and I look on you as a robber, and with that *basta!* If by chance you should sue me for it then know that you are but a worm; if I choose I will spare you, or trample you either." In return he is "well-disposed"—*i.e.*, averse to all innovations. If Kulígin talks of a lightning conductor, he calls him a Tartar for his pains, and threatens him with the police. Yet Dikóy finds a supporter in Kulígin, who would have to cave in to any energetic opposition. Still, Madame Kabanóv is not afraid of him. The Kingdom of Darkness is not shaken by the Kulígins and Katharinas, who timidly avoid all conflict; they fall victims to it themselves rather. Katharina commits suicide because, when deserted by her husband, she gave way to a momentary impulse of the heart; the man at whose head she in her need for love was for throwing herself was indeed but a milksop. But even without this supposed conjugal error there was for the dove no escape from the beaks of the crows.

A further commentary is supplied by "Heavy Days"; the characters are partly reproduced from previous comedies. There is the lawyer who wished to remain honest, and in doing so could neither live nor die, since bakshish was the necessary supplement of his scanty salary. He gave his appointment up, and became adviser to the "Beards," or tradespeople, who only despise an upright official. The question what he is doing Dosúzhev answers as follows: "I am living in a country where the days are still divided into 'light' and 'heavy,' where folks are convinced that the earth rests upon three fishes. According to the latest news, one of these appears to want to move, which must turn out ill. Here folks fall sick of the evil eye, and are cured by sympathetic

methods; here are special astronomers who watch only comets and the two men in the moon; here special politics reign, and despatches arrive, mostly from 'White Arabia' and the parts around. In a word, I live in the Abyss, having slid down to its farthest end." To this "Abyss" (*Puchîna*) a comedy is especially devoted, which describes its family life, with the motto on the surface "Peaceful, calm, full of sentiment, soul in soul" and a moral Sodom and Gomorrha within. The good folks have read neither Hobbes nor anything at all, but they teach most insistently the war of all against all; they are not without a well-defined sense of family; how can it be a matter of scruple to spend the money of wife and children instead of that of others? You live for the family, be nice and honourable in it, but with all others let it be war; if you succeed in grabbing something just carry it home! "It fares ill with the family into whose patriarchal happiness—sheer unculturedness . . . a slough that will swallow you up"—the poor fellow married; it lives almost solely on the work of the daughter, who sees her beauty fading away; soon her work will be at an end; she hates it, she is listening already to their rich neighbour, who will provide for her and her family. How the grandmother, who regards her granddaughter as a spotless angel, out of pure selfishness, hoping she may make further sacrifices for the family, will neither persuade her to nor dissuade her from her shame, how evil thoughts confuse the girl, who finds no hold nor counsel, is delineated with astonishing realism—though the expression was not yet current then. The unsparing trueness to life with which Ostróvsky strips his heroes and heroines of all romance contrasts all the more sharply with the rich uncles and other winners in the lottery of happiness who transform the necessary, natural, tragical conclusion at the last moment. Let us only notice briefly other comedies which bear witness to the versatility of the author; among them a middle-class Othello to whom to be sure his Desdemona gives well-founded occasion for jealousy; she is watched by his family, the picture of which—the old blind father with a quiet gaiety of disposition not uncommon among the blind, gratitude towards his Maker, and delight in life, and

the sickly, nervous brother—displays in the brightest light the delight and skill of Ostróvsky in episodical figures and scenes. Characteristic minor figures are often more interesting than principal characters, and especially in the later pieces there are splendid instances which show great genius for comedy.

It was not the doing of the public but the stage managements, and still more St. Petersburg, that this meritorious author had his pleasure in creating exceptionally embittered. Pin-pricks and want of consideration of every kind were Ostróvsky's requital for his defective adulation and paying of court ; the discontent of the nervous, overtaxed artist—he was astonishingly productive—bade him retire from his thankless labour for the modern stage. He turned his attention to the historic *genre*, dramatic chronicles in verse which indeed are not meant for the stage. But the choice of tragical subjects in the absolutely undramatical Slav history, where the decision is brought about by the dimensions, by patient waiting, and not by any energetic action, is exceptionally limited, and even Ostróvsky did not extend it. He too adheres to the time-honoured period of the troubles, carries on in due form Pushkin's chronicle, in his "False Demetrius" and "Basil Shúysky," in two parts, and in "Cosmas Mínin."

By his choice of these subjects Ostróvsky only did violence to his genius. What he could not observe directly he was unable to make live ; the Slavophile imagination, which had played him many a trick even in his contemporary plays—coquetting with the good old times and their traditions—concealed for him the historical figures behind a thick incense cloud of antique honesty, piety, and solidity. The dim, almost lifeless, but unindividual figures, the dignified but stiff expression of hollow feelings, make up not in the least for the want of real dramatic antithesis. In this respect things are worst with the second piece, first in point of time, where the anti-national party apart from sheer reviling and suspecting undertakes no kind of action, so that the great patriot Mínin is given an easy part to play ; his greatest opponent is the rapid cooling of the quickly kindled herd, the instability and want of firmness of their minds, the hereditary vice of slaves. More successful are the

historical plays in which the State plays no part, *e.g.*, "The Voyevode" with his dreamy face, which in a second, little called for version of itself remodels the villain, in whom we are not disposed to greatly believe because of his absolute villainy. These historical plays showed, in spite of their stricter construction, no sort of advance on "Boris Godunóv"; Pushkin adhered far less to documentary history and yet hit the historical key far better. In "The Voyevode" we are more interested in the adjuncts and insertions, the people's songs and dances, and Ostróvsky in his "Little Snowdrop" advanced a decided step farther, and brought popular fancies as they were on the stage. "Little Snowdrop," the tender daughter of Frost and Spring, allows her senses to be taken captive by the songs of men, of the shepherds, and in spite of her father's warnings makes towards them and is exposed by her beloved to the sun's rays, which kill her. But the fairy kingdom of the Berendêi, with the humorous setting forth of its heedlessnesses and cares (the waning of Love as of the power of the Sun), the popular songs and customs, the picturesque accessories among which Snowdrop lives, lend a high æsthetic charm in spite of all the artlessly primitive and unaffected matter, which has no deeper meaning at the back of it, like the "Sunken Bell" to wit: it is no allegory or symbol, except perhaps a glorification of poetry and of the magic of song.

Ostróvsky was, however, far too passionate a lover of the stage—it was he to whom in the evening of his days, when his strength was already exhausted, the management of the Moscow Theatre was confided, which, to be sure, devoured the remainder of his strength in a few months—for him to be able in the long run to forego modern and theatrically effective productions. He, therefore, went back to them, but was now obliged to choose even more than hitherto different types. For into the Realm of Darkness, thanks to Reform, though not to the Kulígins and Katharinas, light and air had penetrated, though within very modest limits; its quaint originality was in process of rapidly dying out, hence Ostróvsky less and less tries back to his favourite types, *e.g.*, in "The Warm Heart," where one rich sluggardly merchant keeps dreaming of the

Apocalypse and the end of the world, while the other does not know how to get through his time and means; the sycophant must put all sorts of things on the stage, even tableaux of highwaymen, merely to amuse him. A third, Ákhov, in "A cat has not always Carnival," keeps his steward and nephew out of many years' wages; only by the threat of suicide—Ákhov would never take that sin upon himself in his own house, while elsewhere it would not matter to him—does his nephew wrench from him what is due and marry the girl on whom the old man had himself cast an eye. Nothing so vexes the old man as that the young should decline to go on their knees to him, the mark of outward respect; he no longer understands the world. Instead of tragical encounters we now have comical, as when, contrary to the will of the domestic tyrant and her son (a pretty pair, like Mme. Kabanóv and her son), the latter quite dependent because each of his speculations would, but for his mother's intervention, land him in the debtors' prison—a nurse brings it about that her *protégé* marries the rich granddaughter. The splendid caricature of the old soldier, a youthful love of the old woman, and of the fruit-watchman, smack strongly of farce. The old life giving place in the capital, Ostróvsky brings the provinces more and more to the fore, the life in the quiet nooks in the country town or in the country. Even here the foreground of the picture is constantly filled by a love story, frequently with the variation that wife or maiden learn to cherish real feeling after they have for a moment allowed themselves to be allured by a Will-'o-the-wisp. As in almost all Ostrovsky's plays, the subjects still remain as thoroughly insignificant as the life around is itself; we are compensated by accessories and episodes, such as in the "Wood" the Russian Heraclitus and Democritus, the two actors without boots or resources on their wanderings through the Russian "Philistias"—not only beautiful and noble language, but noble thoughts also, are still only to be found with the actor!—and they put the rich to shame; one of them gives up his last money as a dowry for a poor girl; all applaud his act, but none will drink brotherhood with

him. He avenges himself by declaiming a passage from "Die Raüber," which play, luckily, has been passed for performing, else the matter would be "inquired into." And even the pieces of which the scene is laid in Moscow strongly recall the provinces, *e.g.*, "The Last Sacrifice," with the foreigner who cannot await at the club the fitting moment for the buffet.

The composer seeks for new themes, depicts a new Harpagon in the shape of Krutítsky, who hangs himself on losing his money-bag, with the minor figures, the merchant and harbourer of thieves, who has thrashed his wife with everything possible except the stove, so far, his puffed-up daughter and her foolish suitor, who smears his future mother-in-law's face with soot. Didacticism begins to creep in, as in "Bewitched Money"[1]; money earned stays still, while that of others will not remain in the pockets, but riots round as Mlle. Cheboksárov, of a once rich but now impoverished family, and all her swains learn; when she cannot go on longer with her good time she has to decide on the hand of a provincial, who makes her pass through a sharp schooling before showing her off in St. Petersburg. Still worse did it fare with the "Dowerless Girl,"[2] who also prefers a provincial to the vainly-awaited rich wooer, but gets herself abducted and pays for it with her life.

Amidst all these "debauches" there is something peculiarly refreshing about the simple mercantile family of Karkunóv in "A Heart, not a Stone"; the old man has married a young woman and made her not susceptible to anything except good works, which she constantly practises, even though this is evilly interpreted by relatives of her husband's, who would like to disinherit her. She stands her ground against all intrigues; nothing can penetrate her purity. The old man thinks only of the salvation of his soul after death, and is for distributing everything to beggars, who will pray for the welfare of his soul, while his young widow would at once forget him. But although she declares to him, sincere as ever, that she by no means intends to remain a widow, he

[1] Bêshennya Dengi. [2] Bezpridánnitsa.

does not carry out this threat; her kindness and the sacrifice she has made for him deserve to be rewarded. Although even here there is no lack of "debauched" tradespeople, this is one of the most attractive of Ostróvsky's pieces. Man and wife do not, as in "Slave-women," stand facing each other like opponents ever ready to fight; the irksome watcher and his victim, who tries to escape him by all the devices of craft and cunning, although it eventually proves that the Argus is by no means a savage, while the swain, as always with Ostróvsky, is only thinking of his own advantage.

The dramatist brought even theatrical life within his purview, notably in "Talents and Admirers," effective scenes from the theatrical life of the provinces, with the stage-struck squire who, as he cannot be manager, satisfies his craving as assistant to him; with the cunning, but timidly dependent, theatrical tyrant, thinking only of profit as manager; with the tragedian, who is seldom sober and much more seldom in funds, and his patron, the merchant; the stupid and covetous "mother of the theatre," the unscrupulous actress, and the "admirers." From such surroundings stands out Nêgina, devoted to her art and indifferent to philandering, who perfects her training and becomes so fond of her stolid, somewhat forbidding, instructor that they are quite certain to marry, when their path is crossed by a rich and judiciously reticent admirer, different from the provincial *roués*; she will yield to his offers, for she cannot renounce the stage, and for it she needs a golden setting. No dramatist who respected himself would have thirty years ago passed the matter by without dramatic or sentimental promptings. Ostróvsky unfolds the intrigue simply, as happens in actual life; he only gives us a piece of life.

Thus Ostróvsky is the most prolific Russian playwright, almost the only one that has exclusively devoted himself to the stage during a career of nearly forty years, whereas other men of letters mostly cultivate the novel and the stage at once. Why, even Turgénev left a volume of plays, written between 1848 and 1850, which, not extending beyond a decent average, and moving in the same sphere as his novels,

add but little to our knowledge of the novelist, though they contain effective parts, especially in the "Provincial Lady," and satirical delineations of high life in the provinces such as cannot be beaten in his novels; with other authors one may even be uncertain whether to class them as novelists or playwrights. In this respect Ostróvsky stands all but alone. His intense activity branches in three distinct directions. He achieved his most important and genuine successes when he put the "Kingdom of Darkness" on the stage. In his historical chronicles he was so totally disappointing, in spite of the soundness of his work, that he might have been denied any dramatic vein whatever. When he went back to modern themes the success of the fifties did not recur; excellence in details, which formerly had not stood out so obtrusively, no longer saved the whole; *e.g.*, in "Wolves and Sheep," again a provincial play, the delightful scene of an energetic girl wooing an inveterate bachelor, how he has to submit to his fate, or the splendid "young barbarian" of a nephew, with his dog Tamerlane. Somewhat trite subjects from a somewhat trite existence form the chief reproach of the "Comedies"; their chief merit consists in the wonderful dialogue, somewhat too diffuse—the "epic" Russians give themselves time for everything—for the stage, but all the more enjoyable for the reader. If any one would learn Russian, let him read Ostróvsky over and over. Ostróvsky never undertakes great problems. Saltykóv would say in his cynical forcibleness, "With such we should be biting off more than we can yet chew." He does not wish to be a pioneer; he contents himself with taking life as it is. Just for that reason his plays—they are often only stray scenes—make an astonishingly lifelike impression, as if we were not in the theatre, only "the fourth wall" had been removed. That is why he refrains from all the devices without which a foreign dramatist cannot manage—*e.g.*, all "well-timed exits," all curtain and noisy effects and far-fetched rejoinders; he never snaps the dialogue off at the decisive place, where with the foreign playwright the curtain simply falls of itself; he always carries it on for the sake of unimportant conclusions, to weaken or let drop the

excitement produced. Therefore, also, his pieces stand but ill the fiery tests of foreign stages; not even the "Storm" or the "Lucrative Post" have been able to hold their own anywhere; they are too flat and run too much to length to do so. But in reading one parts with them all the more reluctantly; besides, their simple, natural sincerity, their humane sentiments, at once prepossess us; a more kind-hearted man than Ostróvsky it would be impossible to imagine. His goodness of heart is displayed particularly in his championship of the defenceless but all the more pathetic victims of Madame Kabanóv, of Dikóy, or of the "Moscow Buffoons"; without tirades or declaiming the weight of circumstances has its effect. People wonder next at the inexhaustible power of moulding, especially the crowd of sharply-defined personalities in the minor figures. Even in the *tabún*, or drove of his merchants, Bruskóv, Dikóy, Ákhov, and Karkunóv, no single figure is repeated. The least important piece, such as "The Bread of Toil: Scenes from the Provinces," contains at least one interesting part, that of Korpêlov, a pendant to Dêvushkin in Dostoévsky's "Poor Folk." He loses his last prop, his niece, and yet chants an enthusiastic hymn to life as such, an embodiment of the *joie de vivre* which the incorrigible optimist and idealist Ostróvsky, a Don Quixote according to Turgénev's definition, in contrast to all the Russian Schopenhauers and Hamlets, is constantly advocating. How very Russian these figures are needs no special assurance, for he stands forth as the most national and original of men of letters; it is also characteristic that with him the weaker sex is the stronger. Among the many characters of the "Storm" the only man is old Mme. Kabanóv, for Dikóy is not a human being, only a savage bulldog whom it seems unpardonable to allow in the streets unmuzzled. Even Katharina, or Nádya, in "Adoption," the unhappy victims of others' dispositions, know what they want—to live at least for one day as seems good to them and help the heart to its rights, let come of it what may. How wholly different are the men who, even when not maniacs, misers, debauchees, drunkards, or gamblers, do not even

deserve to be called windbags, so weakly, nay, even weak-minded, do they appear, without heart or intelligence or energy: lay figures, committing even their crimes, such as the favourite making off with the dowry of the bride, rather out of stupidity and frivolity—the Meriches, the various Koprórs, and so on, puff-balls, not flesh and blood. Lastly, we have the droll personages; no funny situations, no clown's jokes, with which the foreign dramatist keeps juggling against nature and reality, but the unconscious, unstudied humour which does not until the later pieces give place to an irresistible element of force. Ostrórvsky's field of observation is by no means extensive; it does not take in the nobility or the military, the clergy or the learned class, while above all the peasant is absent; we move mostly among petty townsmen, small officials, small merchants, and great rogues. They are almost all "poor folks," amongst whom the rich merchant or the rich lady of rank, of whom there are numerous examples, one less attractive than the other, and very rarely the rich *roué*, the handsome guardian Gnêvyshev, or the "admirers of talent" seek their victims.

Nicolái Solovióv belongs wholly to the school of Ostrórvsky; both conjointly produced several pieces, after which Solovióv worked by himself, without at all extending the circle of them. Other playwrights struck out more independent paths, among the elder ones notably Palm, once prosecuted as one of the Petrashévtsy. The greatest success was his "Old Gentleman," the type of a *bon-vivant* of the old school, a master of the art of living, whose first question to his faithful servant on awakening was, "Zhákob, avonnu delarzhan?" while the answer "Non, mosy" constituted no hindrance to spending the day most agreeably. Compared with this old "Markis" the modern St. Petersburg young men, his son-in-law, the ever "brilliantly polished" Max von Hammer, and their like, are nothing but calculating machines and trumpery with advanced notions. Men of the Bourse and defaulters like Yukhántsev were brought on the stage in his "Our Friend Neklúzhev." Far more important is Alexis Potêkhin, not to be confused with his brother

Nicholas, also a dramatist ("The Deadly Noose," &c.). In Alexis one can study the external retarding influences in Russian theatrical life most conveniently.

In the peasant empire, which numbers ninety million peasants, the labourer is of course the true Sphinx of society, and no wonder if at times Literature has been flooded with the Naródníki and their peasant stories, with the Russian Anzengrubers and Auerbachs. No wonder either if the tyro in letters first sought to win his spurs in this field. Besides the Auerbachs, Grigorróvich, and Turgénev a beginning was made with peasant stories and dramas by two such prominent men of talent as Písemsky and Potêkhin, the former with the "Bitter Lot," the most vivid peasant play before Tolstóy's "Power of Darkness," with the peasant hero who, in the consciousness of his right, hammers away defiantly, and as in view of the shameful breach of all morality on the part of his wife—Písemsky never lets us off without an adultery—he allows himself to be goaded into injustice, he will bear the consequences with manly resignation. Potêkhin put his telling "Man's Judgment is not God's" still sooner on the stage, but further attempts did not find their way on to the boards. Prince Vyázemsky, the chief of the Censorship, only allowed academical or historical and economical, but not literary, treatment of the peasant question, and that at a time when everybody was thinking of nothing but the peasant. The succeeding didactic pieces of Potêkhin's, "A Lump Cut Off," and the like, fared no better; they were only allowed on the stage years later, if at all, or had after a few performances at the time concerning which and for which they were written to be withdrawn for ever; to-day they are obsolete. No wonder that "encouragements" of that kind thoroughly sickened the playwright of the stage, and he turned again to the novel with which he had begun. Palm also wrote novels, *e.g.*, one about the people of the forties, "Slobodín." Potêkhin's best novel is his "Poor Gentry," dealing with the same circles and episodes which Grigorróvich chose in his "Country Roads," the life in the manor-houses before Reform, with its parasites and jesters. Besides, the one

time Anzengruber now wrote peasant stories like Auerbach, which diverged altogether from the usual pessimistic strain, but fairly breathed courage and delight in life, and were not appreciated by the Radical critics just because of their bright colours. In the end he went back to the theatre as a playwright and manager, as Ostrovsky did in his old age.

In the sixties Diachénko had entertained the public with cheap "effects" in the favourite "indicting" manner, anent the irregularities of the law, but was soon forgotten, like the remaining "indicting" dramatists of this period. The most untiring purveyor of season pieces is still Victor Krylóv, known as Alexándrov, author of over a hundred plays; he began in the style of Diachénko, a crusading assailant and rooter out of all abuses, but found it pay better to adapt French pieces for the repertory of the Alexandrinka.

Purpose plays, the woman question and so forth, as in Chernyshév's "Ruined Life," found rivals during the sixties in historical themes. Ostróvsky, Alexêy Tolstóy, Cháev and Avérkiev often worked up one and the same subject simultaneously—Iván IV. of course, or else the False Demetrius. The most respectable performances still remain those of Tolstóy, Count Alexêy of the name, the youthful playmate of Alexander II, subsequently for many years Master of the Hunt—sport was his ruling passion—grew up from his early youth among impressions, of beautiful scenery in Little Russia, of Art during Italian journeys—with the inevitable visit to Weimar and Goethe, whose majestic language impressed the boy—of literature, a love for and cultivation of which he found among his nearest relatives, into an admirer of Pushkin and a contemner of modern didactic literature. Still, in the fifties, in conjunction with the brothers Zhemchúzhnikov, under the pseudonym of Cosmas Prutkóv, he did not refrain from parodying the current Romantic poetry of Kúkolnik and forging truisms which, thanks to their unsurpassable banality, had a splendidly farcical effect. In general he showed a taste for parodies, as in his satirical History of Russia in short stanzas with the unvarying refrain, "And order was

there none again as erst,"[1] or his "Mutiny at the Vatican" of the Soprani, or his "Councillor Popóv," who waits on the Minister without his trousers, all of which is in the collected edition of his works conspicuous by its absence, and, although it is most harmless, can only be printed abroad. (What is it that is not "prohibited" in Russia? The foreigner never can get to the end of his astonishment at the old-maidish prudishness of the Russian censorial sensitive plant.) Certain taste, lively sense of form, and great versatility, almost recalling Pushkin, distinguished his lyrical and epical efforts, especially the ballads, Northern, Scotch or Slavonic themes from the struggle with Christianity and Teutonism: he strayed into still more distant regions in his epic-dramatic poems of "Don Juan Penitent," how he seeks vainly the ideal of beauty and is disappointed at every contact, or in "The Dragon," ostensibly translated from Italian in the Dantesque manner. His most important creation remains, however, the historical trilogy, in reality a Borís trilogy, the "Death of Iván the Terrible," "Tsar Feódor Ivánovich," and "Tsar Borís," 1866–70 (the historical drama "Posádnik," about the Mayor of Nóvgorod, remained unfinished) and the historical novel "Prince Serébryany" (1861), the most readable novel of old Russian life, far excelling the "Kudeyár" of Kostomárov and all productions of that kind. We can deal with the trilogy and the novel together, not because they are the outcome of the same range of subjects, but because they display similar excellences and defects. The author, feeling himself at home in foreign literature and Art, was precisely endeavouring to adapt the Western paraphernalia to the novel and drama of Old Russia. While Ostróvsky approaches this past like an altar or something holy and does not get quit of this constraint and immobility and brings before us stiff pictures of saints, not men and passions, Tolstoy tries to instil Western life and passions into these Byzantines; by so doing he put much life into the matter, though at the expense of historical truth. The great intelligence, the solid literary cultivation, the carefulness and neatness of the work-

[1] The invitation to Rurik ran: "Our land is great and abundant, but order in it there is none."

manship, the original conception of the matter, the abstaining from trite models and the exact archæological study of the epoch, produce very interesting performances : the idiot Feódor becomes a representative of the higher morality, hits by instinct the right thing among the rivals around him ; his physical and consequently psychical weakness, that of his will, makes it impossible for him to uphold his ideals of Christian charity, he is the plaything of Borís ; his father is above all mad about autocracy, inspired only by one fear, lest any derogation should threaten it, a Russian Louis XI. The Borís play leaves us the most indifferent, as it certainly lacks the scenic effect of the two others. Still more interesting than these rhymed State Records, with their not ineffective pictures of boyars and jesters, is the novel with its wealth of lifelike historical and archæological details, the precise object of which was to revive, not facts, but the character of the period, its notions, belief, manners and degree of cultivation. For over ten years the novel held him captive, and what repelled him was not so much that an Iván IV. could exist as that there ever was a society which regarded him without indignation. The magic scenes with the miller, who like every miller has concluded a pact with the devil, the poisoning scenes at the Tsar's table, the judicial duels, the sports and dances of the village youth and of the "Térem,"[1] the robbers disguised as blind minstrels and story-tellers, the details of the garb and weapons of Morózov and Vyázemsky, may compare with the best pictures in Scott ; but Morózov himself, with his Spanish jealousy, and Vyázemsky, with his "Beyond good and evil" like a condottiere, are quite alien to the Russian setting. The hero of the story even, for all his honesty and genuineness, is somewhat inadmissibly artless and limited—to be sure Kúrbsky was a different man to that. The archæological and episodical portion of the work is far more interesting than the ill-starred love-story of Serébryany.

The same holds good of the "Old Days in Káshira" (1872) the best of the numerous historical plays and novels of Avérkiev. He stands far below Tolstóy in wit and cultivation as in style,

[1] Almost = Harem.

but outdoes him in knowledge of people and manners. The tangled plot and the character of the chief hero in its abrupt transformation are absolutely inconceivable in the second quarter of the seventeenth century in Russia or in any other time; but the melodrama detracts in no way from the value of the traditional scenes, customs, and songs, on the wedding evening to wit, and the effective minor figures, such as the podyáchi (under secretary) Zhivúla, the true prototype of that "crop of sting-nettles" that Sumarókov once pursued with such fury, or the flash Glásha who makes a fool of her old admirer.

The Russian drama has not even in the remotest degree been able to attain to the importance of the Russian novel. We might have expected the reverse in view of the educational influence of the theatre—only think of the part it played in the age of enlightenment—given the fondness of the people for dramatic performances; for the Russians had already real people's theatres in the eighteenth century, and even to-day such belong to the equipment of the carnival fairs. Given the realistic sense of the Russian and his undeniable capacity for comedy, and the isolated and respectable starts even in the eighteenth century, in spite of the lack of political and social life and intercourse (St. Petersburg even in 1905 had no Western café), the theatre ought or might have occupied the widest field of action. All sorts of things combined to prevent the flourishing of the theatre: firstly, the inaccessibility of the Censorship, which would consent to nothing reasonable, so that Griboêdov and Gógol would never have been performed but for the intervention of the Emperor: what one might without more ado say in the novel, the press, or in poetry (the Censorship never objected to Nekrásov's, however biting), that might not even be hinted at on the stage. Then comes the senseless cutting short of the time of acting: during the forty days of Lent there must be no acting, hence the best time goes by unutilised, to the economical and moral ruin of the manager and the company; and all the time foreigners perform in St. Petersburg and Moscow, so that the prohibition really weighs on native Art. Add to this the privilege of the Imperial Theatres in both capitals, which until the last decades excluded

private competition, although nowadays model native performances may be seen in private theatres. Finally the theatrical committee only cared for the brilliancy and pomp of the opera, and the French permanent theatre in St. Petersburg; the Russian theatre remained a Cinderella, and the "Alexandrínka" was still regarded as "low." Not till the last few years did the conditions improve.

We have not mentioned all the names of merit, not even Shpazhínsky to wit, who was even translated, Prince Shumbátov and others, because they are too little out of the ordinary in spite of certain successful types. The latest plays, those of Chékhov and Górky, on which also translators and even managers abroad fling themselves greedily, we shall notice below. Both writers are no playwrights, but Russian men of letters who, after the old bad practice, try their hands at plays as well, although they have no dramatic vein; this is not at all altered by the unexampled success of "Na Dnê" ("At the Bottom") with its 500 performances in Berlin.

CHAPTER XVIII

LYRIC POETS

Voicelessness of poetry, especially in the sixties and seventies—Poets of pure art : Tyútchev, Maíkov, Foeth, Polónsky—Poets with a Purpose : Nekrásov—Poets of the People : Nikítin, Súrikov—Recent pessimistic poets : Nadson—Lyric poets and decadents of recent years.

THE times and the men had not been favourable to the evolution of a lyrical poetry that was full of or even capable of life. Given the emphasising of the social purpose of Literature, as has been the fashion since and through Bêlínsky, subjective art was bound to fall into the background : with the increasing difficulty attaching to every free word it was bound to keep repeating foreign, *i.e.*, anthological themes, keep aloof from the impressions of actual life, and thus lose touch with the public. On the intrusion of " purpose " into Literature, it could but follow this tendency if it wished to find readers, and thus must be untrue to its nature. In the fifties and sixties, nay even in the seventies, there were very few poets that came forward with lyrics and even of these few, scarcely one here and there enjoyed real popularity. Even if judges thought highly of Tyútchev, Foeth, Polónsky, or Maíkov, the only popular man was Nekrásov. Nay, there was a time in the fifties when poems did not even find a place in the magazines as stopgaps. And yet at no time was there a lack of men of talent.

To these indisputably belongs Tyútchev, the oldest of these lyrists: one even hesitates to name him in this connection, the

contemporary of Pushkin, who as a man of almost thirty lamented Goethe's death, and after the fall of Warsaw wrote the poem which rises above the "patriotic" lyrics of Pushkin and Zhukóvsky in poetical and humane merit. And yet we have to some extent a right to name him here for the first time, although the bulk of his songs dates long before 1859, for he first became better known to the public after 1854. Whether his family comes from Italy, as do the Tolstóys from Germany, and Iván IV. descended from the Emperor Augustus or not, he spent his best years abroad, at Munich or Turin, acquired great literary cultivation, and could, when far from home, shut himself up more easily in his own world, the world of the beautiful, the good, and of Nature. Thus, his poems became, as it were, free from time and space, although modern pessimism may also overtake him: the scale of his notes, nay more, of his themes, is limited, subjective and exclusively lyrical; but in addition to a truly seductive mastery of form he has also the art of placing daring pictures in unforeseen combinations, and penetrating deeply into the secrets of being. Of his creations the words are indeed true:—

"POETRY.

Amid the thunders, 'mid the fires
Amid the boiling, swirling waves
In elemental flowing strife,
She flies from heaven down to us,
From heaven to us sons of earth
With azure brightness in her gaze,
And on the stormy, troubled sea
She pours the holy oil of peace."

So short and scanty are wont to be his best pieces—*e.g.*, the numerous songs of spring; yet anthologic, calmly joyous moods are rare. The secrets of Nature: the eternal splendour of the snowfields in the high ranges; the terrors of night, which flings back the bright carpet of day from the eternal abyss; how under the breath of the storm the waters surge and grow dark, and how over their wild splendour the dark purple of the evening shines; how in the flashes of the lightning deaf and

dumb demons give counsel and answer; the chaos of the sphinx styled Nature which perhaps conceals no secret; the unexpressible longing; the bodiless world of dreams, set free in sleep—such is the true domain of Tyútchev. Side by side with this he sings of man, of human tears which are poured forth early and late—unproclaimed, unseen, unexhausted, unnumbered, as the raindrops fall in the night of late autumn. Of his Slavophile poems we have already spoken: his Russia is not to be grasped by the mind or measured with the ordinary wand: you must just believe in it.

"RUSSIA.

These poor thorpes, this niggard nature,
Native land art thou of patience,
Land thou of the Russian people.
Haughty glances of a stranger
Will not understand or value
What mysteriously glimmers
In thy nakedness so humble.
Weighed down by the Cross His burden,
All of thee, my native country,
In slave's shape the King of Heaven
Trod throughout and left a blessing."

In the sharpest contrast to Tyútchev, whose purely impersonal lyric did not sacrifice its pictures of Nature and the moods of mind to social questions and needs, and never served the hour,[1] Nekrásov became popular through his journalistic, satirical, and denunciatory poetry: the most purposeful lays of the Russian Béranger flew from mouth to mouth, ousted the products of "pure" Art, and became a dangerous weapon in the hand of controversialist. The quite unmerited and unexpected needs of life forced him into the calling of a journalist, a wholesale writer of endless novels and countless articles, who really could only by stealth render service to his Muse "of vengeance and of grief," "with the tears suddenly starting from her angered visage." For over twenty

[1] Wiener, *op. cit.* ii., p. 348, gives specimens both of "Red-Nosed Frost" and of "Who Finds Life Good in Russia."

years the young listened to these bitter stanzas on the pillars of society ; these melting laments of the proletarian over his unworthy fate, which he only forgets in drink, to this gloomy poetry of the city and its misery, to the inspired odes to the champions of the mind, Gógol, Bêlínsky, and Dobrolúbov. He thus greeted the freedom of 1861 :—

"My mother country, never o'er thy plains
I travelled yet with feelings such as these.
I see the child within his mother's arms,
My heart is stirring with my dearest thought.
At a most happy time this child was born,
God has had mercy, thou wilt not know tears.
From thy youth up, uncowed by any, free,
Thyself shalt choose the path that thee befits—
Wish, thou shalt live a peasant all thy days ;
Be able, to the sky an eagle soar.
Mistaken in these fancies there is much—
The mind of man is pliable and keen.
I know that in the place of serfdom's nets
Men have invented many other toils ;
Yes, but they'll be more easy for the folk
To loose. My Muse, with hope greet Liberty."

Fastidious minds such as Turgénev's could never have become reconciled to such poetry.

An instance may throw light on his method. We are in a railway carriage on an autumn night with its brisk, slight frost. Little Ványa asks his father, the general, who built the railway. "It was the engineers." Then the poet intervenes. There is in the world a Lord, a pitiless Lord, Hunger he's hight :—

"He it was drove hither masses of labourers.
Many in terrible strife
Found themselves here but a grave in awakening
This barren bushland to life."

Dead men swarm round the train, looking in at the window and sing their doleful song :—

* * * * *

"Gladly we look on our work.

We it was strained at it, summer and winter time,
Backs ever bowed as we trenched,
Lived in pit-houses and struggled on famishing,
Scurvied and frozen and drenched.

Half-lettered gangers would rob us, authorities
Flog us, necessity force us to moil;
Everything suffered we, soldiers of God's array,
Peaceable children of toil.

Brethren, when ours are the fruits you are gathering
We in the earth have been fated to rot:
Still do you think of us poor fellows tenderly
Or long ago have forgot?"

The poet addresses Ványa:—

"Be not afraid of their singing so barbarous,
Vólkhov, Oká and the Volga our Mother,
All the far ends of the Empire have sent them,
Each of them is but a peasant—your brother.

Shame to be frightened—your glove will not shelter you:
You're not a child any longer. Look there,
How that White Russian, all crippled and agueish,
Stands up so tall, with his light-coloured hair

Matted together; his lips have no blood in them;
See how his eyelids are sunk;
Work with his feet in the water has swollen them;
Look at the sores on his hands, thin and shrunk.

Hollow his chest, on the shovel that ever he
All day and every day heavily weighed:
Look at him carefully, Ványa; not easily
That man his daily bread earned with his spade.

Not even now has he straightened his back again,
Bent to the earth does he silently still
Dully, with rust-eaten spade in the frosty soil
Dig with mechanical will.

'Twere not amiss for us both to take over this
Noble and dignified habit of toil;
Pray for a blessing on work of the people, and
Learn to look up to the man of the soil.

Be not ashamed of a love for the fatherland,
Much has the people of Ruce had to bear,
Borne has it patiently even this iron way;
Bear will it all that the Lord shall prepare—

Bear with it all, and a broader and brighter way
Sheer with its breast for itself will it plough;
More is the pity that we such a glorious
Time shall not see, neither I nor yet thou."

The father protests against such dismal pictures, and asks for the cheerful side to restore the balance.

"Listen, dear, now are the labours so terrible
Finished, the carman is laying the rails,
Buried the dead in the earth, the sick labourers
Hid in the huts underground tell no tales.

Round by the office are crowded the workpeople,
Scratching their heads pretty sharply are they;
Every one's left in the debt of the governor,
Costs its full penny each riotous day.

All had the gangers put down in a register,
One had a bath and another lay sick;
'Maybe there is something extra about it all,
Still, never mind—it is not worth a kick.'

Blue his kaftán—the respectable grain-seller,
Ruddy as copper and thick-set and fat,
Drives the contractor along on a holiday,
Drives by the railway the job to look at.

Holiday folk step aside for him courteously,
Prosperous tradesman, as wiping his brow,
Sticking akimbo his arms picturesquely,
'Sou, very well, my lads . . . that'll do—sou.

Well, I congrat'lyte you. Naow you go home again
(Hats off when I am a speakin'). And sou
Naow I will stand a good cask to the workpeople,
And *let you off what you owe.*'

Somebody started a cheer, and they shouted it
Louder, more friendly, and longer. 'Look here!'
Singing, the gangers are rolling a cask for us—
Even the lazy ones join in the cheer.

Out come the horses—hurrahing the workpeople
Run the contractor along for a stretch.
Hardly could any one, I should think, General,
Draw you a cheerfuller sketch."

With poems of a similar type (*e.g.*, the celebrated "Front Door") he led off as early as the forties.

This biting mockery of the present goes hand in hand with the glorifying of ideal figures of the past—Russian women, the wives of the Decembrists, such as the Princesses Trubetskóy and Volkónsky: their journey to Siberia; their dreams, conjuring up the glory of youth, balls, and their honeymoons abroad; the fruitless protest of their families and of the authorities, which their steadfastness overcomes; the heartrending reunion with their husbands in the depths of the mine—a poetical monument, even though many a sentimental exaggeration may have crept in, which the grateful poet raised to these characters of antique grandeur. And others too he has not forgotten, contemporary "heroes" of culture, yet quite without antique traits of character: his "Sásha" in the country idyll goes through a history like that in "Rúdin"; tenderly he remembers his own relatives, especially his loving mother. There predominate violent self-accusations, reproaches, somewhat in the manner of Lérmontov, addressed to his contemporaries, who had noble impulses, but have never been fated to execute any of them, and who, though still lingering on earth, are yet long since dead. They love strongly and hate still more strongly, and if it comes to anything they do not hurt a fly; nay, folks say, love troubles their heads, but not their blood. "I despise myself deeply for this, that I let my years go without loving any one, that I fain would love, love all the world, and yet wander a solitary, without refuge and orphaned—that my anger is strong and furious in me, and yet if it comes to the touch my hands fall powerless." True, the

Muse secretly visited him ; she whispered fiery speeches, proud lays she sang, yet suddenly the fetters clang, and in a breath she has vanished : " Ah, how I then trembled in fear ! When my neighbour sank in waves of material distress, I sang all joyously the thunder of heaven, the terrors of the sea. The smallest thieves I scourged to the contenting of the great ; even rascals were astounded at my daring and their praise enchanted me. Under the yoke of years my soul writhed, became obtuse to all, and, full of haughty contempt, the Muse from henceforth turned away. Even the warm faces of the peasants do not content my sight. Their misery, their boundless patience, only augment the wrath in me. What dost thou love now, unbelieving child ? Where is thy idol hidden ? "

It is Mother Nature that is held to make the music of his wrath be still, but Nekrásov only finds access to her through the peasant, thus differing from all other lyric poets. He creates the most wonderful pictures of Nature, scenes of indescribable idyllic grace or of wild and terrific horror, but as with Tolstóy it is never a matter of the magic, the weaving of Nature herself, but of man in his dependence on her. But Nekrásov, the bard of St. Petersburg, and even of its lax beauties, was bound sooner or later—

> "When from its darkling wandering I my fallen soul
> Rescued through burning words that bore conviction,"

and so forth—to come to the peasant, as the social poet, to turn to the basis of the "peasant Empire," to its millions, the Alpha and Omega of Russia, especially at the time when emancipation stirred men's souls. Thus Nekrásov became the most weighty herald of the peasant among the poetical men of mind, and has remained so till to-day. Even here a double tendency is made manifest—one subjective, denunciatory, impatient, reproving, and mocking ; the other objective, losing itself in the delineation of the peasant life, without preconceived purpose or meaning, and of its joys and sorrows and tragedies, at times readily idealising everything, always of high artistic effect. Only compare the

picture of the peasant woman in "The Tróika" (three-horsed sleigh) and in "Red-nosed Frost." There it says she will marry an unkempt peasant :—

"He, a husband capricious, will beat you,
And his mother will bend you in three.

Through work which is heavy and dirty
You will fade e'er your flower-time meet,
Will sink into sleep without waking,
Will dandle your child, work, and eat.

In your countenance, now full of movement,
Full of life—there will sudden appear
An expression of dull resignation,
Of endless and meaningless fear.

In the damp of the grave they will bury,
When finished your youth full of pain,
A breast that no warmth ever melted,
A strength that has vanished in vain."

And then Dária, the unhappy victim of the frost.

"There are women in hamlets of Russia
With a quiet assuredness of mien,
With a beautiful strength in their movements,
And the gait and the glance of a queen.

It were none but the blind that could miss them,
And a man with his eyesight has found
'If she pass, it's a flash of the sunlight,
If she glance, it's the gift of a pound!'"

Such is Dária, but a sad lot is hers; dead is her husband, Prokl, the bread-winner. She must take the man's work on herself, and so she is frozen to death in the forest. In the original the description of the way King Frost approaches and steals up to her is splendid :—

"'Tis not soughing of wind in the pinewood,
Nor the brooklets with murmuring sound,
But the Voevode Frost is inspecting
His domains and is going his round;

To see if the blizzard has duly
  The paths of the wood drifted o'er,
That there's nowhere a crack or a crevice,
  No bare bit of earth any more;

If the tops of the spruces are downy,
  If the oaks have a beautiful dress,
And if firmly are forgèd the ice-crusts
  On waters the greater and less.

He is coming! he strides on the tree-tops,
  As he passes the ice gives a crack;
In his beard with its clustering tangle
  The sunlight plays glistering back.

There is everywhere way for the wizard,
  The grey one is more and more near,
And suddenly right up above her,
  Right over her head does appear.

He has climbed to the top of her pine-tree,
  In the branches he makes his mace ring,
And, vaunting himself of his power,
  A boisterous song does he sing.

'Be not frightened, my beauty, look closer,
  Jack Frost is a nobleman bold;
A prettier lad and a stronger
  You've scarce had the luck to behold.

The Blizzards, the Fogs, and the Snowstorms
  Are obedient to Frost in a trice;
If I go on the sea, on the ocean,
  I build me a palace of ice.

If I wish it, the mightiest rivers
  Long time in my grip I can hide,
And of ice I can build me such bridges
  As people to build never tried.

* * * * *

Then I love, as they lie in their coffins,
  To freeze up the blood in the veins
Of the dead, and with rime to bedeck them,
  In their heads to make ice of their brains.

To the bane of the thief in his mischief,
  To the terror of horse and of man,
In the evening I love in the woodlands
  To make all the crackling I can.

Poor women complain of the wood sprite,
  And home very speedily run,
But the drunkards, both riders and walkers,
  To fool them's the greatest of fun.

Without chalk do I whiten their faces,
  And their noses set redly alight,
And freeze on their beards to the bridles,
  You can chop them with all of your might.

I am rich, and my treasure is countless,
  My largesses my store have not worn,
But with diamonds, with pearls, and with silver
  My kingdom I ever adorn.

To my kingdom come in and be with me,
  To be queen of it thee do I call,
We will splendidly reign through the winter,
  For the summer to sleep shall we fall.

Come in, I will fondle thee, warm thee,
  Give a palace of blue for thy place,'
And the Voevode round her, above her,
  Began waving his glacial mace.

'Are you warmer now, warmer, my beauty?'
  From the top of the pine hear him call.
'Yes, warm,' says the widow in answer,
  Growing colder and shaking withal.

Then Frost, coming lower and waving
  With his mace yet again very near,
Caressingly, quietly whispers:
  'Are you warm?' Says she: 'Warmer, my dear.'

She says 'warm,' but withal she is stiffening,
  He has touched her, her face with his breath
He fans, from his grey beard the needles
  He sprinkles upon her beneath.

And now he is standing before her,
  And he asks her again, 'Are you warm?'
Then turns into Prokl on a sudden,
  And of kisses he gives her a swarm.

On her lips, on her eyes, on her shoulders
  He kissed her, the wizard all grey,
And whispered her sweetly the sayings
  Her dear of their wedding would say.

So pleasant, indeed, did she find it
  To list to his sayings so sweet,
That Dáryushka closèd her eyelids,
  Her axe she let fall at her feet.

On the colourless lips of the widow
  Forlorn is a smile playing bright,
There are needles of frost on her eyebrow,
  Her lashes are downy and white."

For ten years (1866–76) he worked at his mock-heroic popular epic, "Who finds life good in Russia?" His death (December 27, 1877) prevented the completion of this favourite work; it is conceived quite in the style of the people, with its short verses, with its wonderfully popular diction, and the peculiar Russian optimism of despair. The peasants have resolved not to return to their cots, to see neither wife, little ones, nor old folks till they have found the settlement of the moot point, until they ascertain most exactly who it is that lives gaily and at his pleasure in Russia. We follow them in their roaming on the broad track, fringed with birches, that runs far into space, sandy and silent; at its sides spread aslant the slopes with meadows and hay crops. We happen upon idylls, how the priest lives in the village, and on fearful tragedies, how Savély and company buried their tyrant, the German steward, alive, and what happened to them for it. Then the laments of the women; the keys of woman's happiness, of our true freedom, they are flung away and lost even to God himself. The Fathers who lived in the wilderness, the spotless women, those learned in books and Holy Writ, sought it and did not find it; then the idealist Grisha, with his lofty lay of his country:—

"Pondering fight bloody
(Strong was the enemy)
Once was the Tsar.
'Will there be strength enough?
Will there be gold enough?'
Reckoned and thought.

Thou art both destitute
And thou art powerful,
Thou art both powerful
And thou art impotent,
Dear Mother Ruce.

Saved in the slavery,
Heart full of liberty,
Gold art thou, gold art thou,
Heart of the peasantry.

Strength of the peasantry,
Strength that is powerful,
Conscience unwakened,
Long-living righteousness.

Strength with unrighteousness
Irreconcilable,
Ne'er can unrighteousness
Call for a sacrifice.
Ruce has no stir in her,
Ruce as though slain she were,
But there has blazed up a
Spark hidden deep in her.

Rose unawakened they,
Started unbidden they,
Just as the single grains
Heap up the mount of corn.

Rises an army up,
Numbers uncountable,
In it a strength itself
Shows irresistible.

Thou art both destitute
And thou art powerful,
Thou art both powerful
And thou art impotent,
Dear Mother Ruce."

Not to be forgotten is the invocation to the peasant Empire, the drunken, the capless :—

"'Can't reckon Russian drunkenness.'
Our sorrow have you reckonèd,
Or reckoned up our work?
''Tis *wine* that makes the peasant fall,'
But does not sorrow make him fall,
His work not make him fall?

* * * * *

The soul of every peasant man
Is like a lowering cloud.
'Tis angry, dread, and meet it is
That thunders thunder out of it,

That bloody rains should pour,
But wine's the end of everything;
When through his veins a glass or two
Has run, then laughs out cheerily
His kindly peasant soul."

And so alternate the cheerful pictures (one of the most glorious the children in the field, with their father and the dear nag) and the woes and laments (the death-plaint of the poor mother for her Démushka, when she curses the heartless) in this kaleidoscope of Nature. Levítov and Uspénsky write in prose the commentaries on Nekrásov's verses.

None of the remaining lyric poets could compete with Nekrásov, nor did they wish to do so. Instead of his harsh, rough versification, which seemed meant for a leading article; instead of his satires (to which also belongs the satiric tragi-comedy "Contemporaries" in its own parts, the Celebrators of Jubilees and Triumphs, as also the Heroes of our Day, 1875); instead of his popular effusions, which stamped him a *Narôdnik* in poetry, their service was given to pure art; they were valued by judges, often receiving advice from Turgénev, that fastidious critic, but unknown to the great public, at least to the young, who seemed vowed with Písarev to the crusade against poetry and æsthetics. They

lacked the passionate temperament of that good hater Nekrásov, and his bitterness; he the son of rich parents but cast out by them because he ventured to go to the University instead of the Military School, had for years tasted the misery of the intelligent proletarian, exposed to hunger and freezing; even as a schoolboy his satirical tendency had brought him into conflict with his teachers, and he remained an inexorable observer of the shortcomings of the higher circles. The other poets lacked the social trait, and endeavoured to withstand the anti-poetical current of the age and to adhere to their own paths, untroubled by the indifference of the crowd or the parodies of the "Iskrá." They lacked also Tyútchev's poetical gift, which, forced beyond the sensual world, seems seized by the horror of immensity. Even Nekrásov, in contradiction to Tyútchev, adheres wholly to earth and is exclusively a realist like L. Tolstóy, but he protests at the same time, carries on a lyrical crusade, his ideal theme often bursting through the artistic form, which seems to lose itself in a mere jingle of rhyme. Into neglect and uncouthness, this failing of Nekrasov's, the Máikovs, Foeth, and Polónskys certainly did not fall. As votaries of pure Art they set themselves to create what should be complete as to form. They almost all made their bow at the same time, in 1840. It was then that Nekrásov also printed his first collection, "Dreams and Sounds," which he afterwards bought up and destroyed. Several of them served together—Tyútchev, Máikov, and Polónsky, that is—in the censorship of foreign printed works, where they rather formed a guard of honour than let fly furiously. They reached an advanced age in full vigour, "serving" almost for half a century on Parnassus, for they are true Russian Parnassians. The most peculiar features are presented by Apollon Máikov, a member of a family for four generations distinguished in literature and art. Of his brothers one died early, the highly promising critic Valerian, while another, Leonid, was a distinguished student of letters. He himself wished to become an artist like his father, but the success of his verses caused him to become unfaithful to the brush. As early as 1841 the first collection of his poems appeared, anthological and Anacreontic

productions, and all his life long he remained true to the classical world. Not but that he ventured into other fields as well; he paraphrases the Northern Edda, composes the lay of the Neapolitan fool Pulcinello, who with his unrequited love for Columbine and misapprehended pathos becomes on the stage the target of all mockery. He is attracted by Italy, by religious conflicts—Savonarola, Huss at Constance, the Council of Clermont, and the like; he will try his hand at old ballads, like A. Tolstóy, as also at modern themes, "The Princess," a tragedy in *ottava rima* about a young Nihilist girl, but he is still always attracted back to the antique. His greatest work, which he spent thirty years in maturing, is the lyrical tragedy, "Two Worlds; or, The Two Romes," approximately the same denunciation which the "Quo Vadis?" of Sienkiewicz took up a quarter of a century later, his Petronius being called Decius by Máikov, the contrast of the Cæsarian and Christian Rome, of the decay of morals, of the crassest materialism and soaring idealism, with an abundance of plastic figures; and beside this dramatic work, to which the "Three Deaths," that of Seneca for one, belonged, a wealth of the most anthological pieces. In opposition to Turgénev and Tolstóy, who so shrink from death, he appears to him, according to the ancient conception, as the old friend of humanity, yet the Christian idea flows athwart it. "This life is a dream and the vision of a dream, a mirage in a naked, sandy desert; only in death is there full forgetting of all this deception, soothing, dream in God's bosom and without a dream," and again, "Life is no dream or vision of a dream, but a holy light which for the moment lit up for me the heavenly and earthly universe, and death no moment of the annihilating in me of this living ego, but a new step and ascent towards higher spheres of being."

On the contrary Foeth (or Shenshín, the story of his name being something like that of Herzen) and Polónsky are more difficult to keep apart. Foeth adheres more exclusively to Russian themes, while Polónsky's Muse lingers much abroad, in Italy and the East; the former is perhaps the greater artist in form. He attempts *tours de force*, even producing a poem

with nothing but substantives, without a verb, "Shadows of the Night":—

> "Whispering, hushed breathing
> Nightingale in trill,
> Silver and the rippling
> Of a sleepy rill.
> Light of night, of night the shadows,
> Shadows without end;
> Witchery of endless changes
> In the face of a friend.
> Smoky clouds with roses' purple,
> Amber-shining drawn
> Up the sky and tears and kisses
> And the Dawn, the Dawn!"[1]

Far less versatile, he contents himself in his mostly brief and polished poems, like Tyútchev, with the natural image which is briefly transferred to man and the soul. Polónsky is, to begin with, more rich in ideas, the gamut of his notes is far more varied; he at times rose to social poetry, he risks even a larger whole and attempts the popular strain, not without success. With Foeth we are impressed by the freshness of the senses, of his sensuous poetry, maintained into the seventies of his life. Here he reminds us directly of Anacreon, and laughs about himself in 1888 (he was born in 1820)—that he, half a denizen of the grave, ventures to sing of Love. "I pine and sing; thou hearest and art delighted. In the old man's melodies thy youthful spirit lives; thus in the youthful choir the old gipsy-woman continues to sing." In 1886 he sings of the trysting-place: "Seized with alarm I wait, wait here in the road; thou didst promise to come along the path through the garden"; then two stanzas of all the notes in Nature, which the strained ear sucks in greedily—"Silently under the shade of the wood sleep the young bushes. Ah, what a scent of spring! doubtless 'tis thou."

The poems of Polónsky are richer in thought and substance. A noble, attractive personality with nothing of the intellectual

[1] Another version by J. Pollen. Wiener, *op. cit.*, ii., p. 322.

Sybarite which Foeth at times recalls, speaks constantly to us. How charming is the child's poem of Sun and Moon, how Sun deputes Moon to light the lantern, to divide the Earth into circles and see to it who weeps and who prays, who does not let folks sleep. In the morning the Moon makes accurate report; the night was calm, the sun rises gaily; else there is mist, the wind blows, it rains, nurse does not go into the garden, does not take the child with her. He tries his hand at Greek and other historic ballads, "Cassandra" and "Prometheus":—

"I went under rocks wrapped
In the thickness of night,
To people in darkness
Bore heavenly light;
Long freedom from terror
And sorcery's freight,
Bore thirst after knowledge
And pow'r to create.

Suddenly the darkness'
Veil was rent asunder.
Zeus had launched through space his
Lightning-flash and thunder.
From their couch the gods and
Goddesses awaken:
Rising, they with panic
Cry the world have shaken."

Then he essays modern narratives—"Anna Galdiná," rendered by a wandering minstrel, though it is not in his strain that this delightful love-story is couched. Before that "Mimi," a love-story at the seaside with wonderful details of scenery. He greets poets and their days—Foeth, Nadson, the Pushkin festival—setting the poet high upon the pinnacles of Time ("Stay there till one thy place shall take") above the selfish wild turmoil that does not deserve it. And in the evening of his long and stirring life, when the lemon is squeezed dry but the skin not thrown away, in the sound of the evening bells, enthusiasm still is wafted to him for the night and calm for the eternal peace.

Such was the poetical trio of allies that amid the socialistic and realistic uproar of the sixties and seventies looked undismayed towards a new revival and restoration of poetry. They were not the only ones. Of A. Tolstóy we have already spoken, and we might have mentioned before then even the friend of Herzen's youth, Ogaryóv, who later followed him into banishment, helped to publish the *Kólokol*, and wrote political brochures, by nature a poet, a Byronist, and a pessimist, whose Muse seems to lack any joyous and energetic soaring: "Oh, were the weary day but past! Ah, what delight if all were still and voiceless! But sleep cometh not; the dark's slow passage weighs on me. What's all I'm fain of longing mightily for —knowledge, daring deeds, and love? All life's whole thrill I would feel, and secretly I feel that vain all longing is, that life is niggardly, that I am ailing inwardly. . . . The cup of life I'm drinking gulp by gulp; more clear becomes its bottom left to sight and life appears a daring venturesome."[1] Pleshchéev also became a pessimist, who had put out on the sea of youth with such audacious hopes, spurring his friends on to action, who promised himself so much from waking the sleepers, from branding the criminals, full of confidence that the moment of resurrection was at hand—already the ray of truth flashed from the clouds. Instead of that, in the Semyónovsky Square the musket barrels lightened against the Petrashévtsy; however, like Dostoévsky, he was pardoned and returned to St. Petersburg after some years; only he left in Siberia his optimism, his hopes, and all his joy. "Notes of familiar songs, will they reach you, friends of my lost youthful years? Shall I hear your brotherly greeting? I see nothing consoling around me, everywhere night and night wherever you turn your eye; early frost cast pitilessly down the beloved blossoms of careless youth. Withal my soul bore a sore disappointment within it, the conviction of the fruitlessness of the struggle . . . but what the hard pressure of life could not kill, I myself, the laggard wight, have buried in the earth, often made a shameful peace with the evil one, and remained deaf to the call of stern Truth. Oh, how my soul aches, how the torturer, Conscience,

[1] Wiener, *op. cit.*, p. 244.

racks me! and in the book of the past I read with shame the story of a wasted life." This totally subjective lyric poetry of laments and reproofs is best represented by Pleshchéev, who besides tried his hand at Nekrásov's denunciatory style, and gained credit as a translator. The Parnassians have another comrade in Shcherbiná, with Greek blood in his veins, in his Greek and anthological songs competing with Maíkov, but else a quite limited mind. More versatile, especially as an excellent translator from Anacreon and Theocritus, Béranger, and the Polish poets alike was Mey, who attempted with good results poetical imitations of the Old Testament, notably the Song of Songs, and ballads and plays from Russian history, especially "The Woman of Pskov," and "Ivàn IV," the lyrical portions of which are meritorious. In this lyrical symphony two poets from the "people" also joined, Nikítin from that same Vorónezh which gave us Koltsóv, and Gúrikov, both contending with poverty and the want of education. The latter, the younger of the two, does not retain the traits of his origin; his cradle might as well have stood in the manor-house as in the peasant's chamber, and he is a lyrist and ballad singer: whereas Nikítin really carries on the work of Koltsóv. His best-known work is the "Kulák" (sweater)—how Lukich forces his daughter to marry the man she does not love; the details, from the uproar of the fair to the wedding festivity, and how later Lukích, who is in debt, seeks vainly for help of the rich, obdurate usurer, are given with fidelity to life, the moral of the whole is scarcely edifying: complaints of petty distress and its pressure, which does not strike like lightning, but slips in so that the floor does not crack, yet throttles and throttles till the victim suffocates. Of more account than this popular tale—for its petty townsfolk are still in close touch with the people—are his pictures of Nature—the descriptions of the mill, the winter nights, the God's acre with its buried grief (at the child's grave, despite the charming scene around, he says: "Sleep, little one; scarcely were it worth the while to awake, to make the heart break over the woes of men"), the lads at the stud farm, the whole village, together with its splendour at sunset; the dark

speck of a man on this fiery background, the life of Nature in wood and field.

Nikítin attracted by his own striving as well as by his references to the people which was still for a long time to be in the foreground of interest; his coming forward with patriotic songs during the Crimean War had already made him known, and his "Kulák" met with a warm reception, but quickly the poet became silent for ever, yet he exceeded Koltsóv's life as such. How unpoetical, however, the age essentially was is shown by the fate of two other poets, Sluchévsky and Apúkhtin; they come forward as early as the sixties with their lays, but draw back timidly in view of the materialistic flood, not to reappear till decades later. Apúkhtin is of the lesser consequence; his poems may be complete in form, but leave us cool, and his tales are almost more interesting. Unlike him, the poet-philosopher Sluchévsky met with applause, especially in the last ten years (he died in 1904), and managed to place himself in one of the first ranks; he was even styled the "King of Contemporary Poetry"; a lyric poet, he yet accomplished the exceptional in descriptive poetry. Let us at least quote his appreciation of Russia from "Songs from a Corner": "A land bereft of living beauty; you find it but hints and strokes. Everything in it is not bright but full of shadows, beginning with the men: if they weep, their grief is shallow; if they love, they love but lightly; always confused, they look uneasily, all of them, as if they concealed something. This pallor of their humanity is the outcome of the nature of their land—chains more crooked, hills smaller, inhospitable deeps of forest, rivers that pour their waters as if in sleep; an ever grey and damp horizon, the fierce cold of the harsh winter, the days not strong enough to emerge from the mist, silent smoothness of boundless plains. A series of unfinished pictures; some one thought of them and outlined them, then threw the pencil away and went to sleep!" His snow-whirl ("In the Snow") "sweeps along, here unnoticed, there more openly, twists and twines round rocks and tree-trunks; it has passed over the steppe, now it breaks its way through the wood, the senseless creature wrestles with the mighty space. On to the steppe it

adventured itself, into the mountains it penetrated, into the dark solitudes, into the clefts it pierced; it creeps out of the dead, rotting marsh to the bright pinnacles of solid eminences; it leaps without bridges or slopes; it at times leads you such a dance that the wanderer's heart stiffens, then it runs somewhere saucily up, remains hanging in the air as if in sport, and darts down again and merges secretly in God's wilderness, the sleep-encircled." While notably the older lyric poets, Tyútchev, Foeth, and above all Nekrásov, are widely circulated in translations, Sluchévsky has remained unknown in foreign countries.

When at length, in the eighties, Literature had recoiled from its direct tasks, the evils of the day, the peasant and other questions, and the new reaction was favouring the growth of the æsthetic tendency, a lyrical flood came rolling in to make amends for the poetical low tide of the preceding three decades. The number of poets increased alarmingly, while the few old ones—Foeth with his four collections of "Evening Fires," and Polónsky with his "Evening Chimes"—almost disappeared beneath the surging crowd; a whole page would hardly hold their mere names, and yet more difficult would it be to keep an eye to distinguishing traits and sharply differentiated physiognomies. This lyrical flood is not yet on the ebb, but has of late been swelled and discoloured even by decadents.

The most popular, and the one who at the same time contributed most to the new lyrical fashion, and the most attractive is Nádson, who passed away early, in his twenty-fourth year—a tender, sensitive nature, nervous, restless, pessimistic, and gloomy, without firm resolve or firm belief, but humane and noble at once, sympathising and pitying, harmonious in expression, convincing because sincere and genuine.

"My Muse is dead—not long she radiance shed
Upon my lonely days, the flowers their bloom
Have dropped, the fires have burnt out, and the night
That none sees through is dark as is the tomb."

But "this voice with the nervous tremor, like a brother's voice in a lonely hour, was caught up by enflamed youth, by the wakeful soul of the women." Polónsky sings of him; "Strengthless is my sick and pallid verse, cold and doleful is our hapless speech," yet they produced what is imperishable:

"My friend, my brother, weary, suffering brother,
Let not thy soul sink whosoe'er thou be.
Though evil and unrighteousness be lords,
In fullest power upon the tear-washed earth,
The holiest ideal mocked and broken,
And shed in streams the blood of innocents.
Have faith, the time shall be when Baal shall fall,
And Love shall once again to earth return.
Not crowned with thorns nor crushed with weight of chains
Nor with a cross upon his shoulders bowed,
But he will come to earth in his strength and glory,
The shining torch of happiness in his hands.
And there shall be in the world no tears nor hate,
Nor tombs without a cross, nor slavery,
Nor need that leaves no glimpse of light, the need
That murders, and no sword nor pillory.
My friend, no fancy is this bright return
Of Love, it is not just an empty hope.
Look round there; beyond measure evil weighs,
The night around is beyond measure dark.
The world will tire of torture, sup its fill
Of blood, grow weary of the struggle vain,
And raise to Love, to unrestrained Love,
Eyes brimming with the prayer of suffering."

This sanguine assurance does not hold long. Despairing scepticism takes possession of his heart; in the struggle and turmoil of the universe the only goal is the peace of non-existence. As against eternal torments there is no eternal Paradise; even that would become as lamentable, commonplace and purposeless.

In a few years the poems of this youthful singer passed through ten editions, when he was carried off by consumption, which has raged so cruelly just among Russia's men of letters. They, in fact, rang in the new lyrical epoch; its hall-marks being perfection of form, exceptional fondness for plastic

pictures of Nature—in this they quite resemble the "Parnassians"—and at the bottom of their reveries deep and destructive scepticism. "Three gifts," sings one of their best, Fófanov, "did Heaven send down to earth, to comfort sad hearts. Fair is their beginning, but bitter their end. In rays, in blossoms, in the whirl of enjoyment genius glides into sight, flashes by and hides itself like a dream; in the world of darkness dreams of happiness light us like stars of salvation, but their magic flowers are scorched by evil experience in the fierce storm. Love, bright and like to the gods, bestows on us raptures and sweet strains. Ah! dear friend, he too becomes wearisome to us." How beautifully he depicts the awaking of Spring: "All is melting, all is thawing. Murkily the snow has slid down upon us; a silver rain falls from the roof. The last tears of the frost are kissed away by the reddish sun, the last dream of the winter sounds and smokes and thaws, yet painful is it to listen to the newly-awakened turmoil; piously greeting the Spring, I think heavy thoughts. Everything melts, hopes and years; and the memory of former love dissolves like the ice of awakened Nature, is lost beyond return, and friendship is like happiness, not lasting, and the heart, even as tears, grows cold, and all that we cherish in the heart deserts the weary memory."

And so it always is. The master of form and of the picture contents himself very rarely with the natural occurrence, with a joyful and thankful emotion. In spring he lets out the awakened fly into the azure of the sunny day, and wonders what the child of the indoor air can want with it, wearisome as a work-a-day thought, greedy as earthly covetousness: "Fly, oh fly! would that with thee the carking of cares could leave me." Or again: "The organ-man makes, to the delight of the children, his wretched box of keys resound; then the window opens, soft finger of a trembling hand drop coins to him like tears that he may depart and the court remain still, and more sweetly sleep in voiceless hush the torn chords of a torn soul." No wonder that with Merezhkóvsky Nature harangues man thus: "All I gave thee, life, youth, freedom, and in this glorious world thou knewest not one single hour

how to be happy like them all, like the beast in the forest, in the ether the swallow, and in the silvery dew the sleeping flower; the joy of being thou destroyest with doubts. Away! thou art repulsive to me, thou weakling and sickly one. With thy probing intellect and haughty soul seek happiness without me, as thou knowest how." Mínsky (the pseudonym of Vilénkin) extols the beneficent storm that has brought to a close the unending drought. He enters the fragrant garden and sees a nest shattered by the storm, how the mother that will not be comforted circles over it, and reflects, Could but the mother in her grief realise that the storm saved a whole country! Ah! what is the native land when the home nest is wrecked? Frug speaks of hope as an anchor in the sea of life, and adds: "Mockery is this at best, and deception. If thou canst put out the anchor, how shallow is the sea that confronts thee! But when the sea is fathomless, what help is thy pitiful anchor?"

All ranks are here represented, beginning with the Grand Duke Constantine, the President of the Academy of Sciences, the interpreter and delineator of "Hamlet," with his modestly delightful lyrical gift; Prince Tsértelev, more philosopher than poet, as is Vladímir Solovióv; Count Goleníshchev-Kutúzov, with his warlike songs and narrative poem, "The Twilight"; down to the self-taught Frug, the son of a Jewish colonist, who by preference treats of ancient Hebrew themes. Some of them have passed over to the camp of the decadents, like Vilénkin and Merezhkóvsky, as also Brúsov, Sologúb, and Bálmont.

The decadents form the most recent and for the present the thinnest stratum of lyric poetry and drama: the soil has been from the first not favourable to them. On the public, nay, on the greater portion of the critics, specially those who were sworn supporters of the social, denunciatory, "bourgeois," and popular poetry of a Nekrásov, the decadents and symbolists with their strictly individualist poetry, which directly tabooed the favourite altruistic *motifs*, with their rare and mimosa-like sensitiveness, their almost instinctive responses to all the workings of the outer world, with their sovereign contempt for

all middle-class catechisms, deliberate estrangement from the people, and all their dread of the every-day and commonplace, could only have an alienating and alarming effect. This refined æstheticism, even without its exaggerations, could not tickle the coarse palate of those accustomed to Radical and peasant fare. They avenged themselves by unsparing contempt, and one may rightly maintain that the public for the most part only knows the decadents from the parodies and ridiculings which notably Burénin, the feuilletonist of the *Nóvoe Vrémya*, does not tire of concocting. His cheap mockery will in the end pass away, but the decadents remain, and with them a rejuvenation of Poetry, both in its matter and its manner. Russia was the last to be affected by this movement, and no great or guiding genius seems yet to have arisen. The sober, matter-of-fact cast of the Russian mind cannot further this movement, but it is there, and can neither be disregarded nor laughed out of existence: its works and the creators of them cannot for the present be brought into perspective as a portion of literary history, hence we refrain from mentioning their names.

Women play an even more limited part among the lyric poets than among the novelists: there is none that could share the fame of her German or Polish sisters (such as Madame Konopnitka). Nay, even the erstwhile distinction or celebrity of a Countess Rostópchin, the poetess of balls, or a Madame Zhadóvsky, the elegiac and melancholy observer of Nature and the vanished past, cannot be claimed by the modern poetesses, Madame Bekétov and Madame Solovióv, of the well-known Moscow family of litterati and scientists.

Lastly, let us remember the translators. There has been no lack of such, and these of great artistic merit, since the days of Pushkin, who rendered Mickiewicz and others. In individual cases this branch makes up a large portion of their total output—*e.g.*, with Foeth, whose "Horace" (complete works) easily exceeds his original work; with Mey, the translator of Schiller, and others. Finally, others devote themselves almost exclusively to translation, like Gerbel, who, in collaboration with others, added Schiller, Goethe, Shakespeare, and Byron to their native literature; M. Mikháilov, deported as

an offender—political, of course—to Siberia, where he soon after died, who first and foremost brought Heine's Songs within the reach of the Russians, but also translated much else in a masterly way: he was, however, prolific in himself as a man of letters, as witness his novel, "Birds of Passage," from the wandering life of provincial actors, but must not be confused with Mikháilov-Scheller; lastly, Weinberg, who rendered tragedies of Shakespeare, Byron, Shelley, and Gutzkow, and later Goethe and Heine.

CHAPTER XIX

THE WRITERS OF SHORT STORIES

Exhaustion of literature—Prevalence of smaller forms, especially the short story and the sketch—Retirement of the "Naródniki"—Pessimistic tale-writers, like Gárshin—Korolénko and Potápenko—Chékhov and Górky—Andréev—Conclusion.

For the moment Russian soil is totally exhausted, and modern Russian music can claim more respect abroad than literature.

Its success was unexampled, and yet it has by no means yet been fully appreciated. The fault lies with the intermediaries, the translators, who, while offering garbage, pass by what is of most value. What guides the taste of these extraordinary creatures we can never learn: they translate, for instance, Nicolas Potêkhin instead of Alexis, Potápenko's plays, which in Russia at most the theatrical treasurer notices, Danilévsky's historical novels and society stories, which no one now reads in Russia itself. The translations, too, are often made not from Russian at all, but from French, and the man who first rendered "Anna Karénina"—of course from French—left all the genuinely Tolstóyan chapters out, and thus turned it into an ordinary story of adultery by a "boulevardier." It is only slowly that a change for the better becomes perceptible, but the old sins are still far from being made good. Thus I read that Dostoévsky's "Demons" is only forthcoming in a single German version "which suffers from insufficient comprehension of the Russian original, often disfigures and distorts the meaning, and therefore cannot be recommended." This where a work is in question which is as valuable as a

thousand French and German novels. Add to this the difference of Russian conditions, which give the same word a totally different meaning quite unknown to a German, thus making it most difficult to understand—*e.g.*, merchant, noble, student, peasant, and the like. And then the language above all! Because the most translations are made into German out of all languages from all quarters of the world it is accepted as an axiom that German is the most suitable for purposes of translation; but, to say nothing of other languages, German wholly breaks down when confronted with Russian: the most conscientious renderer pitches the key too high or too low, but can never hit the right one. This is due to the language, for all the niceties of Russian are wholly lost in German. The Russian can even modify his verb and express himself affectionately or familiarly, while the German cannot even change his adjective: he has no diminutives at command for that purpose, and so it is with expletives; the Russian expression is far more concrete, material, and tangible, while the German is more abstract and colourless. You need only compare Turgénev in the original with the best German rendering in order to measure the vast difference, and he is the most easily translated, whereas if you tried it with Dostoévsky or Levítov there would only be a rough impression.[1]

In spite of these shortcomings of the renderings as to number and value, shortcomings partly inevitable, partly brought about by the insufficient care of the *traduttore-traditore*, the success of the novel—for that alone was in question—was one unexampled in the annals of literary history. The literature which, granting always that they took any notice of it at all, folks had been wont to look down upon as an offshoot from Europe, vegetating painfully in an alien and unfavourable soil, proved itself rich in imposing and original phenomena, by the side of which one had nothing to set even in an old and rich

[1] All this applies in a still higher degree to English, with its absolute lack of diminutives. Still, it can render the niceties of Russian verbs better than any non-Slavonic languages. Good translations of the great novels have been indicated in their place. Dostoévsky still lacks such.

Literature. Let any one name the works which could even be compared with "War and Peace," or "Crime and Punishment." It was made plain to the astonished world that the Russians had preceded all others in realism and naturalism without Zola's pandering, and in the fathomless deeps of the human soul as pioneers, and that to them who were last called into the vineyard the favour of the Lord had been not less extended than to those who had been labouring since break of day. Nay, they showed things that were bound to irritate the West, an analysis which made no respectful halt before any of the time-honoured Western bugbears, a love of men, a seeking before all of the Godlike in man, even in the most abandoned, which simply put to scorn all Western conceptions of morality or ideals. And the Russians were severely handicapped in the matter, for a play of Ibsen will sooner be caught at than a many-volumed, diffuse, styleless Russian novel.

Unique, too, was the crowding of unprecedentedly numerous men of talent into a brief period. How far—to take Germany—do the birth-years of its classics lie from one another, and how close together those of the Russian! Only Tolstóy is some way off with his 1828, else they were all born about 1820—Dostoévsky, 1821; Turgénev, 1818; Nekrásov, 1821; Grigoróvich, 1822; Ostróvsky, 1823; and all of them together, lyric and dramatic poets, romancers, and tale-writers, came before the public in the forties, and under the auspices of Bêlínsky, again with the exception of Tolstóy. But the soil has exhausted itself for the time being, and the activity of the great period is for the present only carried on by Epigoni: there is no lack of writers, but there is no prominent talent; the most original and promising either fell silent early or their power of production was altogether not very great, and contents itself with productions on a small and ever smaller scale.

This was in part due to the conditions themselves. In the sixties and seventies folks rejoiced that at length beside the effete, exhausted man of culture from the upper classes, unfitted for the battle of life, an unbroken, fresh, energetic strength tempered in the most arduous conflict, that of the

untaught Russian, the offspring of peasants and of a peasant priesthood and peasant petty townmanship, would import new sap and energy into Literature. These hopes have been fulfilled only to a slight extent. The plebeian author, as a rule, came to grief, under the most favourable circumstances, through consumption (Chékhov to wit), but mostly by delirium tremens, madness, or suicide, and the fault lay not solely with a quite abnormal youth spent in the greatest misery under most fearful pressure. It is thus that with Russians as with others the direct transition from uncultured strata to strenuous mental activity is wont to avenge itself: the individual succumbs sooner or later to the unwonted burden. Dostoévsky, Nekrásov, and others suffered terribly in their youth, but as scions of cultured stocks they showed themselves far more equal to the most exhausting labour than the Reshétnikovs. The democratising and plebeianising of Literature has thus been able to bring about no startling change as compared with the preceding period, that almost wholly depended on the aristocracy. The aftergrowth showed itself but little reliable. Circumstances of another kind also stood in the way. The young generation which came on the scene in the seventies and eighties is palpably tainted with reaction: it lacks the artless impulse of that of the fifties and sixties; it has lost the old patriarchal belief, but mere negation no longer satisfies it—the "clearing of the soil," of which Bazárov and Písarev raved. It can create no new belief for itself; hence the duality, desperation, and want of will of these folks without energy or conviction, with their sensitive nerves and their humane dispositions; hence no great venturesomeness and no great production. It runs, to be sure, to a short story or a poem, often with a finished setting, but higher their ambition is not wont to reach. Only compare Nádson or Gárshin, typical specimens, and those the best of this aftergrowth. Hence the predominance of the short story, sketch, or silhouette, and hence our right to place this last graft in the sign of the short story and its producers.

As to time we put Gárshin first, the melancholiac who in 1888 ended by suicide while of unsound mind. He was

but three and thirty, and his literary activity dated only from '77. The war made an author of him, and what he there saw and reflected he first told the world in his sketch, "Four Days"—for four days the severely wounded Russian, tortured by thirst and hunger, lies beside the Turk he has run through, whose corpse decomposes in the sun's heat. Later comes the "Journal of Private Ivánov"—all of it strictly objective, without satirical or sentimental promptings, with some complex characters, to wit the lieutenant, the tyrant of his men, whom they want to murder, and who cries like a child at the loss of them. His choice of other themes stamps him a lunatic in the thrillingly beautiful "Red Flower," which he regards as the incarnation of evil, and to root up which and evil together he sacrifices his life. He loves to draw battered folks wrangling with themselves and Fate: the coward, who yet, to avoid seeming one, goes to the war which he hates; the intending suicide with his pathetic letter of renunciation to his fellow-men, "the bloodthirsty, grimacing apes"; especially interesting was the artist Ryabínin, a dreamer in contrast to his jovial colleague, who thinks of nothing in the world but his landscapes. He has reproduced a dangerous situation in the work of an artisan with wonderful power (here the Western ceases and the Russian begins), only to ask himself, "What boots this picture, gazed at by the leisured populace, and made his own by a wealthy Philistine? Away with Art! the craftsman must be helped." Others are partly allegories, the stately *Atthalea Princess* who longs to go forth of the straitness of the hothouse into the free, cold air which brings her her death, and so forth. At bottom it is all "terrible, incoherent cries of woe," yet he never arrived at depicting "no longer his own self, but the great world without." Would his grapple with it have been victorious? His heroes, at least, lack all vigour: these brittle vessels can resist no pressure. Seldom did a greater effect fall to the lot of a work that in quantity was quite insignificant.

At most Korolénko might compete with him, a Little Russian, as his name shows, born in the West Country, from the towns and villages of which he chooses his subjects,

in the end finding his way to the extreme east, being sent by a thoughtful Government all the way to Yakútsk "to get sober." He has every reason to be thankful to it. For he became famous all at once through his "Makár's Dream," the story of the drunken Yakut who, having got frozen in the wood, fancies himself dragged before the tribunal of the great Toyon (Lord) in heaven, and how he defends himself there. To this were added other (Siberian) "Sketches of a Tourist," about the bandit life there; others, again, drawn from Polish-Russian towns, Zhitómir and the like, entrancing in their simplicity, such as "In Bad Company"; the child of highly-placed parents finds sympathy among beggar-children, is attracted by the romance of their God-forsaken dens and the whole ragged proletariat, and the way the affair ends; "The Blind Musician," the awakening of the world of emotion in a child born blind, but extremely gifted as to music, a pregnant, fascinating, psychological study, the most full that he has hitherto written, leaving out of the count his ethnographical studies, which have also a humane and philanthropical object in view. But with Gárshin, as with Korolénko, we have, in fact, rather to do with completed "prose poems" than with short stories (*cf.* notably the latter's "Old Bellringer," or "Easter Eve").[1] Korolénko entered the career of literature almost thirty years ago, but his whole work has remained almost as limited as that of Gárshin. In spite of all official "blandishments," he adheres manfully to his convictions. What he thinks of the system is shown by his "Wondrous Maid," the Nihilist as transfigured in a simple gendarme, who, though in the service, has remained a man; also by his open letter to the St. Petersburg Academy, in which, like Chékhov, he declines with thanks its membership when it struck out from the list of its members the name of Górky, whom it had chosen of its own accord—an instance at once of thoughtlessness and want of principle only possible in Russia (or am I, perhaps, mistaken?).

An all the more inexhaustible and unnatural productiveness is enjoyed by Korolénko's countryman, Potápenko, of whom

[1] Translated in Wiener, *op. cit.*, ii., p. 437.

it might once have been thought that he would rekindle the Little Russian humour of a Narêzhny and a Gógol in the doleful, splenetic, gloomy Russian Literature; but his talent did not fulfil the promise of his early days. Humorous were his Little Russian peasant tales—not the subjects indeed, but the way he told them; and so were his pictures of Petersburg's literary Bohemia, into which there drops a provincial schoolmaster, who thinks he has discovered high literary talent in himself—"Holy Art"—but soon this vein was exhausted, which only continues to appear in detached episodes and parts—*e.g.*, in the representatives of youth in "Sensible Notions" ("Zdrávya Ponyátia"). The subjects in themselves were anything but humorous: the "General's Daughter," who, in spite of the touching example of her predecessor, cannot accommodate herself to her lot as village schoolmistress, and kills herself; the "Secretary of His Excellency," who, in his zeal for his duty, to the mocking of bureaucratic formalism, has forgotten to live a life of his own; "On Active Service,"[1] where a highly-cultivated cleric gives up his fat city benefice, and goes into a village to work for the poor man to the horror of all his cousins and the whole clergy—as a pupil of an ecclesiastical seminary, Potápenko knew clerical life—who ascribe to him all possible motives except the real one, yet whose attacks he nevertheless defies. "Sensible" were the notions of the young man, who made his beloved marry, and become the heiress of the rich old man, himself subsequently leading her to the altar. The reckoning tallied wonderfully, but the result was less desirable. Excessive production ruined his talent, especially when he turned to the stage and enriched the Russian repertoire, year in, year out, with pieces which take and please, only that by the next season they are already forgotten for ever, and achieve purely material, never literary, successes, and also move in the most well worn of orbits without offering anything new.

Yasínsky (or Bêlínsky) also promised more than he per-

[1] "A Russian Priest," translated by W. Gaussen (pseudonym Library), 1891.

formed : he seemed to have chosen the study of love as his special province, and to be destined to cultivate it in all possible shades, from the childish liking between young cousins to midsummer madness and adultery, even in an old man. He was fondest of the professed "lady-killer" and the man of culture, strong in words, but shrinking from all decisive action. The scene he loved to transfer to the south-west, to Kíev, the districts from which he himself hails. Excessive production, routine, catching at cheap popularity, and coquetting with modern shibboleths at last deprived him of all credit. If in his tales you happen upon a situation, a problem, or a character out of the ordinary, it gets no farther than mere skimming or glancing by. The author does not take his art seriously ; he is contented with cheaply amusing his reader. In spite of honest work his colleagues—Álbov, Barantsévich, and Novodvórsky—never even succeeded in securing a circle of readers that came near his. Now it is the limitation of their themes, viz., the intelligent proletariat of the capital with the two first, one and the same hero bankrupt from the start with the latter. Now it is defective skill, the losing oneself in superfluous and uninteresting detail which keeps them from deeper effects. It fared similarly with Prince Golítsyn (pseudonym Muravlín), with his novels of the St. Petersburg aristocracy and his delineations of the "Degenerates," decadents, neurotics, male and female, candidates for suicide and weak-minded folks out of that sphere ; much ado in writing over one and the same subject ; the nervously debilitated of the higher classes ("The Poor and the Smart," "The Tenor," the preference of princesses of that kind for artists from abroad, "The Princes," &c.). Everything is depicted pessimistically, not without personal feeling. Other tellers of tales were the two Lugovóys, of whom Alexis especially brought himself into notice by his Roman story, "Pollice Verso," but has otherwise no noticeable literary traits, and Gniedich, who in his "Chinese Shadows" gave us silhouettes from St. Petersburg life.

High above them all stands an artist by the grace of God, Antón Chékhov, by profession a physician, hence the frequency

in his stories of doctors and descriptions of disease, especially mental—*e.g.*, "The Black Monk."[1] He began his rapid, brilliant career in the same comic papers which Léykin should never have left: his pseudonym of Chekhonte was attached to work which seemed often calculated for the Parisian "Gil Blas." He also often wrote for the *Strekozá* (*Cicada*), with its unpretentious jokes about merchants and guests of honour at weddings who are hired for a fixed sum, and so on, mostly short feuilletons. These latter grew more lengthy and with them, contrary to the usual rule, his talent expanded to longer stories, which soon placed him at the head of modern writers of such. Now his uncompleted work—for he too was carried off prematurely by consumption, after a youth full of severe privations—is before us in ten volumes, of which one is devoted to the interesting description of Sakhalín, country and people, another contains his plays, and the remainder sketches and short stories.

What a wealth of characters! and not only human, for even animals come on the scene, speaking and acting—the miraculous poodle, who has had an accident, as well as the dappled bay. He only avoids the upper classes, otherwise you find all Russia represented the small postal official with his dread of inspection or his making out that his wife is the mistress of the generally dreaded chief of police, by which he gets rid of other wooers; examining magistrates, Grammar School masters, and clerics—in the most frightful poverty; choirmen, innkeepers, merchants, and men of family, who for that matter are often merely officials, down to ferrymen, night watchmen, and thieves; only quite by accident on one occasion does a real Excellency happen among folks that are simple but contented and bring about the upsetting of all order. We listen to the talk of middle and lower Russia, with its delusive hopes (of a prize in the lottery!), its material disappointments and privations, its struggle for life, its fruitless shaking of the bars of its cage, its rare protests and constant compromises. Laughable, nay humorous,[2]

[1] Translated with the terrible masterpiece "Ward No. 6," and other stories, by R. E. C. Long. Duckworth, 1903.

[2] It is not always easy to endorse our author's idea of humour.—E.H.M.

are many of them; never to be forgotten is the fat squire who has to go into the water to disentangle his lines, and cannot explain to his children's English governess that she must go away—even the catalogue of the terms of abuse that he flings at her head is beyond price—or the skilful orator, who makes a speech over an open grave, by mistake not about the dead but one of those present; or the philosophical converse of the very drunken officials in the country town; or the petty official who is furious that, when his pay is so small, he has to be on duty at Easter, and debates whether he could not better his position by denouncing some one, only one must know how to go about it, else one may get into a dreadful hole, so he vents his fury on a cockroach that is running over the table. He is simply inexhaustible in ideas, witness the youth who rouses all his friends and relations at midnight to tell them his good fortune in his name being in the paper, in the police report of a students' row; the terror of the man who trips over a coffin at home and the same happens to his friend with whom he takes refuge, and the harmless explanation of the matter; the "amusements" of the summer holiday-makers, and so on. It strikes one how pessimistic are his notions about women; even those who seem selected by him to be victims end in bringing the man to the slaughter. Unscrupulous plundering of the man and senseless frivolity are only too often the qualities of his women and girls, who seem wondrously skilled in the art of capturing "partners"—adulteresses as in the delightful legal farce "The Swedish Matches," with the wonderful circumstantial evidence which is brought against the murderess, the only drawback being that the murdered man is living quite contentedly (much as in Burénin's farce); in "The Coward" where the cuckold helps his wife's gallant to a money present as well and others, the adulterers predominate in number and guiltiness. Beside these drastic themes, or anecdotes rather, there are finely executed psychological studies, such as of the professor who on his jubilee-day so pessimistically flings aside life and success.

St. Petersburg sinks wholly into the background; Moscow is more frequent, but Chékhov's favourite hunting-ground

is the provinces, and if you sum up the general impression you come back to the verdict pronounced half a century before by Písemsky in "An Old Man's Sin." In order to live in such a society, whether you want to or not, you need a goodly reserve of "bravery." Thus Russian life does not change, and Chékhov's humour, like Russian in general, is not to be greatly trusted. Humorous details often hide a most tragical background, which all of a sudden breaks through. The farewell to life of his provincial actor, for instance, is tricked out in the most vivid comedy, but what gloomy tragedy is at the back of it! Or take the letter of the poor boy which he puts in the box addressed only "To my uncle"—what a true and touching child's tragedy! What tales the portly merchant has to tell in his old age of the dreadful freezing he went through as a blind-man's boy! Here one perceives a fragment of autobiography.

Chékhov remains the strictest of realists, even where he depicts something mental ("A Case from My Practice"—the mental unsatisfiedness, developing into a physical malady, of the young and rich girl) or stark madness (in "The Black Monk"); all mystical moods are alien to him, and his pencil knows no indistinct, wavering touch. No superfluous detail, yet with all the chariness, the greatest vividness, but lively, bright touches are wanting; grey on grey are his pictures, even as the life which they depict. There is not lacking a tendency to the symbolic ("The Man in the Case" who has shut himself in alive from all contact with the outer world); allegorical parlance is quite familiar to him, as to all Russians, as when he gives vent to his impatience at the scarcely perceptible advance of Progress and the recommendation of its "legality" in the figure: "Is this, then, forsooth, legality that I, a living, thinking man, should stand at the grave and wait till it is overgrown, or fills itself up with mud, whereas I can jump over it or bridge it over?" Or, again: "There should stand some one behind the door of every contented and fortunate man with a hammer and remind him constantly by tapping that there are unhappy men." Symbols and allegories he is particularly fond of in his plays—for this story-writer became a playwright, although the

dramatic vein is wanting to him. He began by simply putting his tales into dialogue and dramatised shape, and indeed they are repeated almost word for word, as in "The Defenceless Creature" and "A Marriage of Calculation," but even his plays remained merely such dramatised short stories, "The Seamew," "The Three Sisters," and so forth, with their depiction of the surroundings, and the absence of a dramatically enlivened treatment and effective contrasts; the same "set grey life" that, with its daily and hourly working, slowly but surely, not mangles, but crumbles and eats away the strongest will, the fairest intentions, and the most determined character. There are not wanting very distinctive types, as witness the "Three Sisters," with their one and only longing for Moscow, to get out of the slough of provincial life; and yet we know that these plans and expectations will lead to nothing, and that the sisters will sink in the viscous mire of blank vegetation in the country. Deep Russian pessimism hangs over these wavering, vague heroes, at war with themselves and without belief in themselves or their cause; but in contradistinction to his stories, in his plays Chékhov always brings on the scene people with a firm belief in another and better future, dreamers and comforters; we involuntarily begin to doubt whether these idealists will prove right, yet even this indication of a way of escape, this *sursum corda*, deserves all recognition. For otherwise it is disheartening in this antique Russia with which we make acquaintance in Chékhov. Its broad plains repose in the most peaceful sleep; nothing disturbs its churchyard quiet, not even the cries of the physically or mentally famishing, in these towns where the soundest must get sick with boredom, and villages where the rudest superstition, the old aversion to all intellectuality (fruitless are the attempts at a *rapprochement* of the same), and bitter want remain ineradicable. Those become tired and slack who once dreamed of stirring men's minds, they drown their bankruptcy in alcohol; those most at their ease are the unmitigated egotists who live at the expense of their neighbours, and often manage, further, to secure for themselves a halo of superiority ("Uncle Ványa"), even with the resigned victims of their

selfishness, in whose mouths the reference to an object in life, this "hoping against hope," sounds almost like blasphemy. And everywhere the reign of a blind chance under whose wheels men fall unwittingly, like the little servant-girl who half unconsciously strangles the child of the inn people. All along the line there is one universal victory of routine, of life-habits, of the grossest egotism, of the most pusillanimous weakness: woe to him who follows the dictates of his heart, woe to him who rebels against it! And fragment by fragment this mosaic of olden Russian misery fits itself together; and insupportable in the long run would be the sight, but that deep sympathy for the victims, a purified humaneness (Chékhov has a strong aversion from Tolstóy's ideals), and, above all, an unobtrusive, modest, but exceptional skill has inspired this picture; an almost inexhaustible power of shaping which takes delight in an abundance of always living and ever fresh individuals (Chékhov sets his face against generalisations or types). Add to this a rich fancy which excites our lively interest through ever fresh and unforeseen but sufficiently logical turns and transformations; a healthy realism which does not shrink even from drastic touches, a strong dose of humour, that gift so rare in Russian Literature, and a carefulness in execution which surprises us agreeably. Chékhov has been dubbed the Russian Maupassant—perhaps because of the predominance of erotic subjects and stories of adultery (in his plays almost all the couples are wrongly assorted)—but he differs from the Frenchman in fainter handling of the brush, the avoidance of effects (even where there are tragic entanglements), and his greater love for man; it is only the latter, and not Nature, that he knows and depicts; even his animals seem men in disguise. In Chékhov we make the acquaintance of Old Russia as, awaiting the descent of the angel into the pool of Siloam, it vegetates rather than lives, dreams and slumbers, and ask in astonishment where foreshadowings or guarantees of a change, of an alteration for the better, could be forthcoming.

Such signs and pledges we find elsewhere. Chékhov is a strictly objective artist, a regular pupil of Turgénev, recalling the old aristocratic literature, in spite of the

change in the choice of subjects and types, a pessimist who allows the world to go its own way; the protest against this world, the resolute demand for a thorough "change in the time-table" is embodied in Górky[1] (the pseudonym of Pêshkóv, another pupil, if one may talk of schools with these self-taught men, of Korolénko's). He is like to be put on his trial to-day on the ground of alleged instigation of revolutionary proclamations, but each of his sketches, short stories and plays which the Censors themselves have authorised, is in fact a revolutionary proclamation. Both of them, Chékhov and Górky, came from the same dregs of the people; but how utterly different are their characters! How they reflect the old contrast of Russian artistic natures, which we, to reach back to familiar types, might simply characterise as that between Pushkin and Lérmontov, the objective artist who in the end reconciles himself to the most cheerless life, and the subjective, unsuited to compromises, who abides by his protest against "order," which seems to him anarchy, even though he come to ruin in the process. This sharp, protesting note is the most interesting point in Górky. Without literary training, without very subtle talent, a haunter of the ground in spite of all abortive idealistic and allegorising soaring for which he has not the wings, is the representative in literature of the barefooted vagabonds (he hardly knows any other kind), a new and significant phenomenon. Before him there were always malcontents, but they pined in helpless wrath, gnashed their teeth secretly, and clenched their fists in their pockets, without seriously intending to do harm to any one; they lacked the energy and the initiative. His heroes, whom one would rather not meet at night, are not the irresolute Hamlets, gnawed by deliberation, of all ranks, ages, and sexes, which are so characteristic of all Russian literature, not only the aristocratic, all the "problematic natures," which in Russia were almost more appreciated than in Spielhagen's own country, but are resolute to fight, devoid of scruples, tap

[1] Most of Górky's tales have been translated. The best study of him (with specimens) is by Dr. E. J. Dillon.

their fists or the knife in their boot legs, and fly straight at the society which has cast them out, and make full use of their powers, truly masterful natures, raised above good and evil, following their instincts or caprices, recoiling from nothing—only they are quite out of their part when they proclaim themselves victims, call society to account, make a parade of assumed romance, seek the truth and attack evil, as if wolves were to put their lust of blood on the sheep. This new and passionate way, this placing himself on the side of the strong and his rights in life (woe to the weaker who comes in his way !), quite opposed to the altruistic and humanitarian main tendency of Russian Literature, secured Górky's almost unexampled success, above all with the young and the malcontents. Abroad there was added the charm of the ethnographically new ; the type of all these land-loupers, vagabonds, and wrecked lives, as they gather together, notably in the "Shelter" ("Na Dnê"), was exceptionally fascinating. Górky is, if possible, even less a playwright than Chékhov ; his dialogues and descriptions of surroundings in the "Petty Townsmen" and "The Shelter" make no claim to a dramatic framework. His province is more limited ; virtually he only knows and depicts the "bosyak" (tramp). His irresolute weaklings, as in the "Petty Townsmen," have always been familiar to us. And equally limited is his art ; as long as his rough heroes swear and behave roughly we are moving on carefully reconnoitred ground, otherwise we at once land in mist and abysses, a fact which is no wise altered by the Tolstóyan Luká Lukích in "The Shelter." To Chékhov's disadvantage, especially abroad, Górky has been vastly overrated ; a literary boom without parallel has sent up his success beyond all measure. He is interesting to me as a Russian "objector," not as an artist ; from his subject, not his form ; from his key, not his melody. You can feel with regard to him, and are thankful to him for it, that he will enter into no feeble compromises, will demand everything, and not content himself with the most paltry instalments on account. He is a strong man, no great artist but the precursor (the stormy petrel) of a new generation, which it may be

is approaching at stormy speed, and will declare war against melancholy, "aristocratic hypochondria," the native long-suffering of the people, and the foreign pessimism of the cultivated. Górky is more essential to Russian life than to Russian art. To the rest of Europe he has no message whatever, unless it be his boundless contempt for the effeminate man of culture, unfit accordingly for the struggle of life, and therefore always eager for compromise.

Górky gave the keenest expression to this contempt in a lecture at Nízhni Nóvgorod, his and Korolénko's place of abode, which treated the public to a very agreeable surprise. The "daring writer" who, spoiled by his success with the public, metes out to his admirers such *verba veritatis* to the utter delight of the demon at his elbow, so that all his hearers, as once they did over the tirades of Chátsky, slowly make off and leave him alone, was no other than Górky himself; and the charges of the most pitiable cowardice, of the wretchedest compromises, and the abandonment of all principles, and their way of calmly wiping it off when people spit in their faces—all this those present had no choice but to apply directly to themselves. Górky remains true to himself even when he transfers his stories to higher circles, and his "Várenka Olésov" is really only a vagabond, even if attired in the most seductive costume. She can strike a man dead, she would make no pother about it; and you cannot imagine a more pitiful contrast than the cultivated, highly-principled, most up-to-date St. Petersburg Lecturer in Botany, a most worthy representative of thinking people, and the complete bankruptcy of his whole personality as compared with the uncultured child of Nature who looks up to him with so much admiration, and is as energetic as he is weak. The closing scene is of a brutality that is simply painful, almost symbolical of Górky and his movement: the sheer mockery and scorn of all intelligence, the sated, unmuscular, and cowardly, which must yield to the hungry, the audacious, and the strong.

On the other hand, an artist of note seems to have arisen in Leonid Andréëv, who again owes his celebrity to short stories.

He differs from all those that preceded him, particularly in his modern and impressionist style. He seeks to reproduce things not as they in fact are, but as a morbidly refined, at times abnormal, set of feelings conceives of them, in wholly subjective creation, which contrasts sharply in particular with the colourlessness of Chékhov and the defective technique of Górky. An often fantastic and ghostly exhibition of the object, of an utterly material, nay, even vulgarly repulsive situation—no fantastic quality, in the manner of an Edgar Poe, but the strictest adherence to everyday prose, yet as against this a strengthening of the impression on the overwrought, harassed senses, a hearing of the unhearable, and seeing of the unseeable—as compared with the usual sobriety of Russian colouring, this gaudy laying on is something new, and exactly recalls the style of our modern school, which swells itself into mannerism and artificiality. Read, for instance, "The Red Laugh," a simply ghastly delineation of the horrors of the late war, in detached sketches, by one who took part in it, and was severely wounded, and his life at home, to the torture of himself and his neighbours. Vereshchágin's well-known pictures could never have depicted so poignantly the horror of war—the brutalisation of men, their frenzy, the physical sufferings, the becoming callous to everything, the purely mechanical, instinctive, nay, idiotic conduct of the victims led to the slaughter—as these brutal, desperate, frenzied words, this asking "To what end and why?" Or "The Tocsin" with the panic, paralysis, and alarm which it spreads on the occasion of conflagrations. We laid stress on the style, the psychology, because this is new; it was always the forte of Russian artists, and of their art, as with Chékhov, to depict men with a few touches to the life; think, for instance, of the lacquey Fenogen, how when his young master rushes off into "The Unchartred Distance," *i.e.*, the revolutionary propaganda, from his comfortable parental abode, this time for ever, the old servant runs after him like a hen after the duckling that takes to the water.

If we have already not been spared gloomy studies by Korolénko and Chékhov, the sheerest desolation greets us in

Andréëv's tales. I do not recall a single one which would not get fearfully on a man's nerves. Even the "Foreigner," the incipient consumptive, who saves up the pence he earns by lessons towards a journey abroad for purposes of study with the character of the unfortunate Servian patriot, in spite of some humorous points, makes one feel terribly low, and they are all alike; even the most laughable of all masks awakes no "laugh" in us. "The Abyss" recently was the occasion of a controversy most characteristic of Russia; heroes of Górky's do violence to the young girl, literally under the eyes of her companion, who cannot protect her. The Philistine would say at best that one should not walk with a girl at a late hour through ill-famed quarters; the artless grown-up children debated, on the other hand, upon the subsequent attitude of the hero to the victim of his imprudence, and even Countess Tolstóy intervened in the dispute as to the justifiableness of such writing, which was quite out of place. How Andréëv's talent, hitherto exclusively occupied with gloomy and tragical situations, much like Gárshin's, will develop we cannot say.

Beside Andréëv we might mention Chírikov, known, apart from his short stories, by his play, "The Jews," on the subject of the epidemic Jew-baitings at Kishinyóv, Hómel, and elsewhere; it is not poor in scenic effects; otherwise the Jew plays no part in Russian Literature, seeing that in the Great Russian "Governments" he is not to be found in the country, only coming to the fore in towns and as the representative of the educated class—that is to say, in society novels, in Písemsky's "Troubled Sea," and the like. In Tolstóy, Turgénev, and others he is wholly absent, and only appears with Dostoévsky in laughable incidental parts, but in his cultured seclusion with all the forces that are now moving in his midst—Zionites, Assimilated or Assimilators, he was until Chírikov wholly unknown to Literature. There are also Skitalets (pseudonym of Petróv), a story-writer and novelist ("Running the Gauntlet"), Protopópov the dramatist, and others.

"We cannot go on living like this!" Such is the unanimous cry which to-day resounds from Petersburg to Yálta, and from Warsaw to Tiflis. Doctors and lawyers,

chemists' assistants and railwaymen, workmen and students, civil servants and schoolmasters, Town Councillors and Local Councillors (Zémtsy), the representatives of literature and the Press, with the solitary exception of the *Moscow Gazette*, all repeat this one cry.

Even the wholly dead are awaking. The clergy, which since Peter the Great has been totally crippled, tired of its part as organ of the police, refuses to be commanded any longer by staff officers, generals of Hussars, and professors, by open or disguised atheists, materialists, or mystics. Its present "Kommander," worthy of his predecessors, Tolstóy has immortalised in the "Chief Procurator"—a title quite as fine as "Grand Inquisitor"—Toporóv in his "Resurrection," though, to be sure, the Censors snipped out the glorification. Even the fossilised Church thus demands its independence, a Spiritual Head, and a Patriarch once more. The Patriarchate has not been revived, but Pobêdonostsev is dead. Toporóv, of course, will not hear of anything of the sort.

How the times have changed! Fifty years ago Dobrolúbov wrote a poem on the death of Nicholas's great dignitaries, rejoicing that thus one pillar after another of the system was being removed. His children and grandchildren have long since ceased to content themselves with waiting patiently for the natural process of decay, and hasten it in the most effectual and ungentle manner. Where are the days when the young men of Moscow University jubilantly extolled Katkóv to the skies? To-day even the professors there protest against the University coat of arms being prostituted by being still put at the head of Katkóv's paper. If not long since they conjured the Government that it should place confidence in society, to-day even the doctors that meet to combat the cholera declare that society has lost all confidence in the Police and the bureaucracy, for in these two the Russian Government is wholly merged.

In traditionally unprogressive Russia everything seems to be bound to repeat itself. Any one reading the programmes, circulars, and memoranda of the years 1855 and 1856, those of a Pogódin or the Slavophiles, would be tempted to print

them off again to-day unaltered, so expressly intended do they seem for the present. And involuntarily one asks, "Will not the present movement to some extent in the end be lost in the sand like those of 1801 and 1855? In the latter year, however, quite important concessions were obtained which, in spite of all the growling of the Retrogressives, could not be rescinded; and of the present we may with certainty expect not everything, but much once again. The Censorship must cease to be so, that it may no longer be truly said of the Press and public opinion in Russia, as it was once upon a time of schools in Naples, that they are tolerated like brothels. There must be an end to administrative arbitrariness, so that never again for a newspaper novelette can an Amphiteátrov be sent, no one knows whither, without trial. And thus many other barbed wires will be removed, so as to give decent liberty of movement. Liberty of thought and conscience will first be conceded—*i.e.*, what Radíshchev a century ago claimed and the Slavophiles have been demanding for half a century in vain.

That we have got that far we owe in part to Literature, in spite of the ex-Pole Bulgárin, the ex-Englishman[1] Katkóv, and the erstwhile Jew Gringmut, despite Rúmich, D. Tolstóy, and Budilóvich, despite all obscurantists, renegades, and traitors. It contributed effectually to self-knowledge, to the awakening of the self-consciousness of the Russian; along its broad, arduous course, strewn with so many victims, its development goes upward. From a quite dependent, merely mechanically imitative trifling of the mind, conducive to passing the time, like "lemonade and preserved fruits," it has become the handmaiden of Truth and Enlightenment, a promptress of conscience, and pointed out ideals of development even at the time when all thinking outside the official shibboleth was tabooed. It has gone its own ways, it has shown itself equal to the great task which fell to it; nay, far beyond Russia's borders its significance to-day shines abroad. The *dolgoterpènie*, the long endurance, has been crowned by the superstructure of a world empire. The stubborn constancy and the high flight of the Russian

[1] Or rather ex-Anglomane.

mind have created a world literature. May this in the future also remain faithful to the humane and æsthetic traditions of its glorious past! The world can no longer dispense with it.[1]

[1] I have left this last passage unaltered, as it was written in 1905; this is not the place to review recent events in Russia. In Literature they seem to have produced complete confusion: the lightening of the Censorship has resulted in a reign of licence going far beyond any liberty that Western writers allow themselves. In this bursting out of elements which had been repressed it is impossible to see any permanent tendency —we must wait awhile for the mixture to ferment and then to clear; not till then will Russian Literature give us successors to its glorious names.

E. H. M.

1908.

INDEX

A

"Abbadonna," 241
Ablesimov, 110
Abramovich, 334
"Abyss, The," 483
Academy, Dictionary of, 99
Academy of Sciences, 334
"A Case," 535
A Cat lacks Carnival, 486
Acrobats of Beneficence, 419
"Active Service, On," 531
Adrian, 68
"Adoption," 481
"Adventurers, The," 419
Age (Dostoévsky's), 328
Akhshumarov, 446
Aksakov, 284
Aksakovs, The, 298
Alaferre, Emperor, 50
Albov, 532
Alceste, 63, 64
Aleko, 188
Alexandrov, 493
Alexander II., 155
Alexis, 57
Alf and Aldona, 417
Almazov, 324
"All Sorts," 95
Ammalet Bey, 240
Anacreon, 38
"A Million," 448
Amphiteátrov, Alexander, 321
"Angelo," 194
Anna Galdiná, 515
"Anna Karénina," 193
Ancient Literature, Lovers of, 334
Andreêv, Leo, 540
Amenkov, 223, 283
"An Official's Morning," 253
Annushka, 53
Antichrist, Peter as, 60, 69
Autonovich, 322, 351
Apocrypha, 16, 17, 32, 34
Apukhtin, 518
Arabian Nights, 370
"Arabesques," 252
Arakchêev, 153
"Arakchêev, A Son of," 448
Arbenin, 229
Archangel, 24
"Archives, Apprentice to," 268
Arion, 208
Arndt, 117
Arians, The Polish, 381
Arphaxad, 133
"Art and Reality, Relation of," 325
Arzamas, 144 ; Origin of, 165
Askold's Barrow, 238
"As you Command," 463
Asmodeus (of Arzamás), 270
"Assemblies," 61
Asya (Turg's), 192, 326
"Athalea, Princess," 529
Auerbach, 437
Austerlitz, Bard's Song on, 169
"Avaricious Knight," 196
Averkiev, 493
Avseyenko, 446
Avvakum, 39

B

Baal, 423
Babushka, the, 362
"Bad Company, In," 523

Bakúnin, 276
"Bankrupt, The," 533
Bakhariana, 183
Balmont, 522
Baltic, The, 24
Banise, Asiatic, 74
Baranovich, 47
Barantsevich, 532
Barsukov, 336
Bartemêv, 336
Barkov, 138
Baratynsky, 214
Basargá, The Merchant, 42
Basedow, 99
Bashkirtsev, 450
Batóry (of Poland), 59
Batyushkov, 152, 175
"Baucis and Philemon," 153
Bayan, 170
Bayle, Peter knew, 78
Bazarov, 322, 327, 342
"Beards," The, 482
Beaumarchais, 157
"Bee of the North," 254
"Bêlkin, Tales of," 200
Bellona, 178
Bêlinsky, 205
Bêlsky, 43
Beketov, 528
Bellarmine, 43
"Belles Lettres," 15
Beltov, 301
Benedíktov, 216
Benevolénsky-Speránsky, 459
Benkendorf, A., 274
Bennigsen, 145
Bentham, 242
Besêda, 148
Bestuzhev, 162
Bezborodko, 117
Bezhim Meadow, 340
Bewitched Money, 487
Bismarcks, One of Our, 444
"Bitter Lot, A," 420
"Black Monk," 533
"Black Year," The, 447
"Blame, Who Is To?" 301
Bodenstedt, 218
Bodyánsky, 294
Bogdanovich, 120
Bogomiles, 15
Boileau, 77
Boldino, 204
Bolotov, 134
"Book of Degrees," 30
"Book of Wrath," 331
Borís Godunóv, 150, 194
Borodinó, 225
"Bosses," 426
Boter, 43
Boyar Oesha, 228
Bova, 43, 136
"Bread of Toil, The," 490
Brusov, 522
Büchner, 348, 351
Budny, 43, 65
Bulgárin, 185, 237
Bulich, 245
Burachkov, 294
Burenin, 523
"Burning, The," 276
"Burning of Moscow," The, 447
Buturlín, 246
Byliny, 9, 10, 18, 22
Byron, translated, 153
Byzantine Observances, 156, 158

C

Cadmus, 133
Cagliostro, 97, 98
Calderon, 98
Calendar, 65
"Captain's Daughter, The," 200
Caspian Sea, 131
Cassandra, 511
Cashier's Wife, The, 219
Catechism, 112, 127
"Cathedral Clergy," 440
Catherine, 91, 100
Caucasus, truly Lérmontov's, 218
"Censor, To the," 202
Censorship, Radíshchev on, 107, 123
Cerularios, 7
Chaadáev, 104, 247
Chaev, 493
"Champagne and the Knout," 354
Chatsky, 159, 160, 161, 163

Chelaev, 229
Chemnitzer, 75
Chenier, 185
"Cherkasses," 45
Cherkassky, 315
Chernyshevsky, 108
Chicherin, 310
Chinese Shadows, 532
Chistyakóv, 175
Chodolinsky, 216
Christ's Night, 475
Christmas Story, 475
Christmas Stories, 445
Chronicle of Grand Duchy, 31
Chronicle of Samarin Village, 426
Chulkóv, 134
Cinq-Mars, 24
Ciphering Schools, 70
Clara Milich, 355
"Coaching Accident," The, 110
Collegium Mohileanum, 44
Columbus, Karamzín like, 166
"Comrade, Letters to Old," 315
"Confession of the Author," 263
Constant, B., 271
Constantine, Grand Duke, 511
Contemporaries, 511
Contemporary, The, 200
Contemporary, Nekrásov's, 282, 283
"Contract, The," 107
Corneille, 102
Correspondence with Friends, 262
"Councillor Popov," 494
"Counts Orlóv, The," 448
'Country Roads," 310, 397
Courier, Herzen compared to, 299
"Coward, The," 534
"Cricket, The," 144
"Crime and Punishment," 397
"Crucifersky," 303
Custine, de, 315
Cyril and Methodius, 5, 15
Czyzinsky, 50

D

Danchenko, 401
Daniel, 44
Danilevsky, 239
Danilov, 233
Dáshkov, Princess, 97, 102
Daudet, 340
"Day, The," 401
"Dead House, The," 394
"Dead Man's Bone," 432
"Dead Souls," 245, 248, 256, *et seq.*
"Death of Ivan," 536
"Deceiver, The," 97, 102
"Decembrists, The," 161
"Defence of a Fool," 290
"Defenceless Creature," 536
De Genlis, 132
Deidamia, 80
Delanov, 319
Delavigne, 213
Delvig, 212
Demetrius, 19, 173
Demetrius, alias Otrépiev, 36, 50
"Demetrius, False," 195, 484
Demetrius of Rostov, 45
"Demons, The," 226, 340
Derzhávin, 126, 131, 136, 139, 141
"Devils, The," 401
"Dialogue," Lérmontov's, 222
Dickens, Gogol like, 272
Dictionary of Authors, 114
Diderot, 92
"Dikanka, Evening on the," 252
Dionea, 83
Dionysius, Abbot of Trinity, 37, 38
"Dmitri Donskoi," 147
Dmitri Kalinin, 277
Dmitriev, 131, 132, 136, 141
Dmitrieva, 450
Dmitriévsky, 83, 110
Dobrolubov, 161
Doctor, The, 340
Dolgorúky, Princess, 134
Domestic Happiness, 368
Domostroy, 131, 132
"Don Juan Penitent," 536
"Dontsy," 309
Doraura, Ernest, 133
Dorpat, origin, 7
"Dorises," 181
Dramatic Trilogy, 452
"Dream, The," Lérmontov's, 219
"Dreams and Sounds," 512

Drechsel, 43
Drone, The, 114
Druzhinin, 283, 284, 323, 358
Dubbelt, 290
Ducat, The, 49, 83, 100
Dukhobors, 40, 118
Dúma, Lérmontov's, 224
Dúmy, 22 ; Derzhávin's, 156
Dying Tasso, 153

E

"Eagle, The," 474
"Earthly Needs, The Wiles of," 309
Eckharthausen, 117
Eda, 214
Election of Nobles, 244
Elegance, alias Nonsense, 142
Elva, 226
Empire de façades, 289
Engelhardt, 334
"Enough," Turgénev's, 352
Epicurean, The Young, 269
Erato, Friend of, 180
Eugene, 134
Eulenspiegel, 43
European, The, 274
Eve, On the, 326
Evening Fires, 518
Evening Twilight, 205
"Everyday Story," 35
Exegi, imitated, 130
"Ex Oriente Lux," 330

F

Fables, 111
"Fact and Meditation," 99
Family Chronicle, The, 308
Fámusov, 159
"Fatherland, Annals of," 278
"Fathers and Sons," 344
Faublas, 132
Faust, 196
"Favourite, To the," 155
Felitsa, 127
Fenichka, 350
Financial Genius, 428
Fingal, 147
Fires, The, 405
Fishermen, 419
Foeth (or Fet), 336, 504
Fontenelle, 77
"Foolsham," 529
"Foreigner, The," 542
Fortune, Song to, 130
Foundations, 437
Founding of Russia, 458
"Four Days," 529
Fourier, 286
Frederick the Great, 121 ; contrasted with Catherine, 94, 121
Freedom, 529
Freemasons, 98, 99, 101, 113
"Freemasons, The," 487
French Influence, 77
"Friend's Shade, My," 153
"Friends of the Sciences," 115
"Front Door, The," 504
"Frontier, Across the," 467
Frug, 524
"Fugitives in N. Russia," 447
"Fugitives, Return of the," 447
"Funeral," 467

G

Gagarin, 203
Galakhov, 334
Galanteries de la Bible, 180
Galub, 189
Gamalea, 109
"Gamblers, The," 253
Gavriliáda, The, 184
"Geese, The," 150
Gellert, 112
Gendre, 158
General Manual, 123
Gennádi, 336
"Georgia, A Night in," 164
Gerbal, 523
German describes Russia (Olearius), 51
Ghiréy, 188
Gizel, Synopsis, 46, 71
Glêb, Uspensky, 472
"Gods, Death of the," 448
Goethe, 120
Gogol, 75

"Golos," The, 312
Golovin, 336
Golovlov, Memoirs, 472
Golushkin the Merchant, 355
Goncharóv, 162
Gordon, General, enemy of Joachim, 40, 49, 58
"Gorebogatyr," &c., 97
"Gorókhino, Annals of," 200, 207
"Gore ot Umá," 355
Gorky, alias Pêshkov, 538
Government Intelligencer, 258
Gozwinsky, 75
"Grand Inquisition of Seville," 411
Græcophiles, 291
Granovsky, 291
Gray's Elegy, translated, 168
"Grazhdanin," The, 444
"Grazhdanka," 64
Grebenka, 249
Grêch, 176
Greek Church, 526
Grigoriev, 324
Griboêdov, 157, 164
Griboêdov, A., 160
Grigorovich, 418
Grimm, 312
Gromeka, 312
Gromval, 109
Grotius, 65
"Ground Plans," 109
"Growing Poor," 444
Grudtsyn, legend of, 53
Grunya, 234
Gurikov, 517
Gypsies, 188
Gypsy, The, 214

H

Haas, Dr., 304
Hahn, Helena, 242
Haller, 100, 102
"Hangman's Acts," 155
Haxthausen, 288
"Heart, not a Stone," 458
Henckel, 85
Hermitage, 97, 98
"Hero of Our Day," 221, 230
Herodotus, 304
Herzen, 100, 102
"High Dignitary," The, 149
Hilferding, 221, 230
"History of a City," 458
Hobbledehoy, The, 394
"Holy Art," 531
"Holy Russia," 270
Horace, translated, 85
"Horde, The," 304

I

Ice Palace, The, 239
"Idealist Lady Carp," 474
"Idyll of the Day," 438
Ikhnilat, 16
"Ilya Ilyich," 386
Ilyin, 309
"In the Forests," 439
"In the Hills," 439
Insarov, 342
"Irksome," 220
Irtényev, 366
Ismail, Ode on, 130
Ismailov, 148
Izmail Bey, 227
Iván IV., 512
Ivánov, 336
"Iváns, The Two," 175, 252
Ivashev, 203

J

Jähnisch, Katharina, 243
Jasinski, 75
Jesuits, 43
Joachim, Patriarch, 144
Job, 88
Journey to Moscow, 104
Judaizers, 27, 56
"Julia de Valerolle," 416
Jung-Stilling, 117, 119
Juvenal imitated, 184

K

Kachenovsky, 75, 186
Kahlkopf, Baron, 249

Kain, Vanka, 90, 134 ; Orlov compared to, 238
Kant, 121
Kantemir, 75, 76
Kapnist, 104, 110
Karakozov, 314, 319
Karamzín, 86, 103, 119–21, 132, 136, 142–3, 165–8
Karonin, 441
Katenin, 158
Katkov, 276
Kazak Lugansky, 243
Kazan, 124
Kempis, Thos. à, 43
Khlestov, 160
Khmelnitsky, 157 : (2) 158
Khniazhnin, 75, 109
"Kholstomêr," 373
Khomyakov, 135, 295 *et seq.*
Khor and Khalinych, 339
Khorev, 82
Khovshelimsky, 449
Khrapovitsky, 97, 129, 134
"Khrestianin," 297
Khvorostinin, 26
Khvostóv, 309
"King of Contemporary Poetry," 518
Kirêevsky, 274, 291
Kiselovs, The, 317
Kitovras, 16
"Knowledge, Blasphemers of" (Kantemir), 76
Kochanowski Psalter, 42
Kochubéy, 189
Kock, Paul de, 257
Koloander, 83
"Kolokol," The, 300, 313
"Kolomna, Cottage of," 192
Koltsov, 232
Komaróv, 90, 331
Konopnitka, Mme., 523
Kopiewski, Psalter, 42
"Kormchaya," The, 146
Korolenko, 529, 530
Korsakov, 75
"Kositsa," 329
Kotlarevsky, 126
Kotoshikhin, 51 ; Herzen's precursor, 51
Kotzebue, 132
Kovalevsky, S., 450
Kozitsky, 95
Kozlov, 215
Kostomarov, 446
Krasovsky, Censor, 286, 288
Kreml, 54
Krestovsky, 427
"Kreuzer Sonata," 386
Krizhanich, Y., 52
Kropotkin, Prince, 402
Krüdener, Mme., 154
Krukovsky, 147
Krusenstern, 177
Krylov, 148, 150
Kuchelbeker, 75, 268
"Kuchelgarten, Hans," 250
Kudeyar, 447
Kukolnik, 239
"Kulák," The, 518
Kunítsyn, 181
Kurbsky, 30
Kurotésov, 310
Kutuzov, 120, 153, 166

L

"Lady Artist," The, 449
La Fontaine, 81, 126
La Harpe, 140, 175
Lamennais, 286
"Last Transfer," The, 224
Lavater, 125
"Lawsuit," The, 353
Lefort, 49, 58
"Legitimism, Bulwark of," 152
Lérmontov, 75, 122, 212, 218
"Lethe, Banks of," 132
"Letters from Abroad," 436
"Letters from Manchuria," 445
Levitov, 430
Leykin, 445
Lichudes, 47
"L'Ile d'Amour" (Trediakovsky), 80
Liprandi, 287
Lisa (Turgénev's), 346
Literary Dreamings, 277
Literary Gazette, 213
Literature of Abuses, 163

Lithuania, 13, 15
Lizark, 135
"Locke, The New," 172
Lomonosov, 75, 84–89, 127, 143, 144
"Lord hight Hunger," The, 501
"Lord's Sepulchre, Oath at," 241
"Loss of a Conscience," 466
Lubóv, 302
"Lucky Jack," 480
"Lucrative Post," The, 481
"Ludmila," 169
Lugovoys, The two, 532
Lukashka, 367
Lukin, 110
Lvov, 133

M

Macarius (sets up press), 27, 30
"Madman, Notes of a," 253
Maikov, 282
Maikov, Leonid, 335
Maikov, Apollon, 512
Maistre, Joseph de, 288
Malthus, 242
"Mamai's Battlefield," 448
Mamelukes, 248
Marin, 268
Marlinsky alias Bestuzhev, 239, 268
"Marriage, The," 253
Martha of Nóvgorod, 142
Martynov, 173
"Masquerade," The, 229
Matryona, 384
Matvêev, 51, 72
Maxim (of Athos), 28
Maxim, Influence of, 29, 30
Maxim, Martyrdom of, 29
Maximovich (Metropolitan), 47
Mazepa (Poltava), 189
Medvêdev, 47
"Memoirs of a Young Man," 305
"Menœa," 46
Merezhkovsky, 333
Merzlakov, 151, 268
"Messenger of Europe," 142, 319
"Messenger of Sion," 119
Mey, 517
Mickiewicz, 190, 209
Mikhailov, 318, 425
Mikhailovsky, 328
Miller, Orest, 329
Milonov, 151
Miloslavsky, Y., 228
Milukov, 36
Mimi, 515
Miramond, 133
Mirzas, 54; (in irony), 128
Miusky, 522
Mohila, 44
"Molchaliny," 445
Mongo, 219
"Monk," The, 216
Mons, Anna, 58
"Monument" (Peter's), 198
Moral Tales, 123
"Moscow and Moscowites," 239
Moscow Journal, 121
Moscow Telescope, 289
Moskaly, 251
"Moskvityanin," 294
Mrs. Radcliffe, 132
Mullah Nûr, 240
Muraviovs, The two, 172
Murom, Ilya of, 9, 136
"Mutiny at Vatican," 494
Muzhik, 55

N

Nadezhdin, 273
"Na Dnê," 497, 539
Nadson, 515
Nakàz, 94, 95
"Nala and Damayanti," 171
Nana, 374
Napoleon, 145
Narezhny, 175
"Narrative, The," 368
Nashchokin, Ordin-, 51
"Nationalists, The," 429
"National Question," The, 331
Naümov, 429
Nekrasov, 284
"Nekropolis," 290
Nero, 300
"Nest of Gentlefolk," 343
Nestor, 10
Nevzorov, 119

"New Painter," The, 228
Newton, 88
Nezhdanov, 353
Nicanor, 134
Nicon, 38
Niebuhr, 272
Niemcewicz, 155, 156
Nietzsche's Master, 414
Nihilism, 283
Nihilist, first in literature, 349
Nikitin, 517
Nikolev, 80, 109
"Noel," 151
"Nose," The, 253
Nóvgorod, 2, 3, 4, 5, 10, 15, 25
"Novice," The, 228
Novodvorsky, 532
Numa, 133
"No Way Out," 446

O

Oblómov, 357
Oblómov, Krylov as, 150
"Obmánovs, The," 321
Odintsova, 348
Odoevsky, 275
Odoevsky, senior and junior, 203
Ogaryóv, 298
"Old Bellringer, The," 530
"Old Days in Kashira," 495
"Old-fashioned Squires," 252
"Old Gentleman, The," 491
Olearius, 57
Olga, 155, 360
"One's Own Bread," 432
"Ophir," 103
"Opinions, Some One Else's," 131
Oriental Garb Discarded, 41
Orlov, The Counts, 448
Orthodoxy, 20, 27, 33, 44, 50
Osnovyanenko, 243
Ossian, 119, 130
Ostrog, Constantine of, 34, 35
Ostrovsky, 295
Otrepiev alias Dmitri, 36, 50
"Our Folk Abroad," 444
"Our Own Dogs," 480
Ozerov, 147

P

Palm, 491
Panaev, Madame, 284
Panshin, 346
Pantheon of Foreign Literature, 172
Paprocki, 43
Parker, Th., compared to Tolstoy, 381
Patriotism a Fraud, 375
Paul, 113
Perovsky, 287
Pestel, 155, 185
Peter the Great, 57, 58, 59 ; abjures Kiev, 63 ; 60 *et seq.*
Petersburg Dens, 429
Petrashevsky, 286
"Petreid" The (Kantemir) 76, 124
"Petty Townsmen," 539
"Philosophie de l'Histoire, La," 289
Pigasov, 345
Plato's wish, 91
Platon, Metropolitan, 116
Pleshchéev, 284, 516
Podlipovtsy, 431
Poemen, 437
"Poetry," 499
Pogodin, 280
"Pokornik," 294
Pokrovsky, 352
"Polar Star," 162
Polevoy, 166, 186, 271
"Polikushka," 388
"Pollice Verso," 532
Polonsky, 513
Polotsky, 42, 46, 47
Poltava, 89
Pomyalovsky, 430
"Poor and Smart," 532
"Poor Gentry," 492
Portrait of Tolstoy, Dostoévsky's, 378
"Poshekhonia," 419, 470–2
Pososhkov, 72
Potebnyá, 347
Potekhin, Alex., 491
Potápenko, 530, 531
Potemkin, 92, 129, 130
Potocki, 42
Potugin, 353
"Power of Darkness, The," 384
"Power of the Soil," 436

"Praise of Galileo," 70
Praskovia, 66
"Princes, The," 532
"Princess, The," 513
"Prisoner of Caucasus," 187
"Private Ivánov," 529
Prokopovich, 69, 76, 77 ; his "Spiritual Ordinance," 70
"Prologue," 424
"Prometheus," 515
Protopopov, 542
Prozorovsky, 117
Puffendorf, 65
Pugachov, 106
"Putrid Marshes," 425
Pypin, 60, 96

Q

"Quartet, The," 148
"Queen of Spades, The," 57

R

Radíshchev, 84, 104–8, 137
Radivilovsky, 46
Raevsky, General, 186
Raskolniks, The, 38, 39
Raynal, 104, 125
Reader's Library, 283
"Red Flower, The," 431
"Red Laugh, The," 541
"Red-nosed Frost," 500
"Reisebilder," 306
"Réligion, Ma," 378
"Rendezvous, Russian at the," 326
Repetilov, 160
Rescue of Nóvgorod, 133
Reshetnikov, 431
"Resurrection," 386
Resurrectionists, 251
"Revizor, The," 254
Richardson, 135
"Robber Brothers," The, 188
Robespierre, 121
Rodiónovna, 180
Romanticism, 179
"Rome," 253
Rosenheim, 452
Roslavlev, 144
"Rossiad," 124, 135
Rostopchin, Count, 431 ; his "Thoughts," 146
Rostopchin, Countess, 523
Rousseau, 120
Rumiantsev, 130
Ruslan and Ludmila, 182, 183
Russia, 500
Russian Beecher Stowe, 450
,, Byron, 179
,, Censorship, Sketches of, 328
,, Critics, 331
,, Dominion, History of, 165
,, Flights, 242
,, Grammar (Lomonósov's), 87
,, Haubert, 357
,, Horace, 138
,, "Iliad," 257
,, Lessing, 275
,, Literature, Most Recent, 328
,, ,, Struggles with West in, 329
,, Officers, Memoirs of, 239
,, Pamela, 90
,, Pindar, 86, 138
,, People, History of, 272
,, Scarron, 125
,, Swift, 454
,, Ulysses, 357
Russian Word, The, 318
Rybinin, 529
Rylêev, 155–7

S

"Sage Oleg," 189
St. Augustine, 43
Saltykov, 284
Samodur, 54
Sarepta, 161
"Sásha" (Tyutchév's), 504
"Sáshka," 216
Secret Chancery abolished, 140
"Secret of His Excellency," 531
"Scared Ghosts," 444
Schopenhauer, 215
Selifán, 257
Seladon, 348

Semyonova, 141
Senkowski, 240, 247
Sensible Notions, 531
Seraphim, Metropolitan, 153
"Servants' Hall," 253
Seth, 132
"Shadows of the Night," 514
Shahkov, Prince, 165, 267
Shakhmatov, 334
Shakovskoy, 156, 168, 171, 173–5
Shaman, The, 98
Shatrov, 309
Shchedrín, 167
Shchepkin, 334
Shcherbina, 517
Shelmenko, 244
Shemrok, 335
Shemyaká, Judgment, 42, 241
Sheridan, 141
Sheremetev, 71, 72
Sheshkovsky, 91
Shevyryov, 276
Shishkov, 142
Shpazhinsky, 497
"Shtil," 87
Shubin, 347
Shumbátov, 497
Shuýsky, Basil, 483
Skabichevsky, 328
"Singer in the Camp," 170
Sketches of a Tourist, 530
Sketches of the Steppe, 438
Skobeëv, 53
Skoptsy, 40
Skorina, 34, 48
Skot, 186
"Slav Evenings," 175
Slave Woman, 488
Slobodá, 49, 57, 59
Slobodin, 492
Sluchévsky, 518
Smirdin, 148
Smotritsky, 35
"Smoke," 342
Snowdrops, 213
Snow Mountain, 518
Snowstorm, 310
"Sobesêdnik," 100
Sobolevsky, 152, 334
Sologúb, Count, 452
Solonim, 348
Solovióv, Vladímir, 329
Solovióv, Nicolái, 491
Solovióv, Andrévich, 335
"Songs of Life," 442
"Songs from a Corner," 518
Sophia Fámusov, 159, 160
Sopikov, 336
Spálniki, 58
Spasóvich, 335
Spasskia Kazarmy, 217
Speransky, 153, 167
"Spiritual Knight," 118
"Spring Waters," 342
Sreznevsky, 334
Stankevich, 232, 275
State of Ignorance, 68
"Stenka Razin," 439
Stephanov, 453
Steppe-man, Memoirs of a, 442
Sterne Imitated, 120
" The New, 165
Stolniki, 58
Stolypin, 219
Stolz, 359
"Storm," 481
Sumarokov, 81–3, 95
"Sunday Sleep," 480
Strekozá, The, 444
Suvarov, 129
Svetlana, 70
Svetlov, 442
"Swallow, The," 130
"Swedish Matches," 534

T

Tanya, 192
"Tarás Bulba," 252
Tashkenters, 426
Tasso, 125
"Tauris, A Journey in," 173
"Tenor, The," 532
"Terek, Gifts of, The," 225
"Terkin, V.," 443
Terpigórev, 444
"The Almighty, The Hand of," 243
"The Ball," 214

"Theatre, On Leaving the," 255
"The Cossacks," 367
"The Dragon," 494
The *Drone*, 114
"Theocritovs, Hamletovs, &c.," 273
"Theon and Æschines," 171
"Theory of the Novel," 443
The *Painter*, 114
"The Seamen," 536
"The Son," 447
The Turgenevs, 168
"The Twilight," 522
"Three Sisters, The," 536
Tibullus, 152
"Titus," 102
"Tocsin, The," 541
Todleben, 287
Tolstóy, 146
Tolstóy, Alexêy, 493
Tolstóy Dmitri, 319
"To my Uncle," 535
"To the Knife," 427
"Trifles of Life, The," 470
"Triumph of Justice," 118
"Triumphant Swine," 287
"Troika, The," 506
"Trúvor," 83
Tsar first so-called, 24
"Tsar and Hetman," 448
"Tsardom, Song of the," 230
"Tsar Nikita," 184
Tsarevna (refuses Convent), 57
"Tsarskoe Selo, Recollections of," 181
Tsertelev, Prince, 522
Tugendbund, 154
Tumansky, 123
Turgénev, 104, 125;
Turgénev, champion of Freemasonry, 117, 120
Tver, Bishop of, 95
"Two Worlds," 513
Tyutchév, 296

U

Ufa, 309
"Ugryúm Burchéev," 460
Uhde, 297
"Uncharted Distance, The," 541
"Uncle Ványa," 536
"Unlucky Dog Anton, The," 418
Ushakov, 107
Ustryalov, 166
Uvarov, 207, 275

V

Vadim, 102
"Valerik," 225
Valûev Statute, 313
"Varenka Olesov," 540
Varnhagen, 174
Vauban, 63, 65
Vengerov, 336
Venice 56
Verevkin, 110
Veselovsky, 334
Viardot-Garcia, Mme., 341
"Village, The," 418
"Virgin Soil," 320, 341
Vishnya, Joan of, 31, 32
von Vizin, 75, 100, 101
Vladímir, 124, 135
"Vladímir," abortive, 170
Vladímirov, 334
Voeykov, 151
Voeykov, Mme., 216
Volhynia, 11, 13, 22
Voltaire, 98, 112
Voltaireans, 160
"Voltairean, The," 248
Volkonsky, Princess, 290
Volynsky, 156, 167, 275, 331
Vonlárlarsky, 284
Voss's Luise, 250
"Voyevode, The," 485
Voynarovsky, 156, 157
Vyazemsky, 111, 138
Vyzhigin, Iván, 237

W

"Wandering Forces," 443
"Warm Heart, The," 485
"Wasteham," 114
"Waterfall, The," 130
"Watermaid, The," 196
"Weber," The Great, 326
Weighing of Styles (Shishkov's), 142

Weinberg, 524
"What is Art?" 387
"What You Are After," 480
"Whirlpool, The," 422
"White's Selborne," 310
Wieland, 120
Wigel, 308
Wilberg, 306
William Penn, 300
Wolff, Chr., 79, 85
"Wolves and Sheep," 489
"Wondrous Maid, The," 530
"Wood, The," 486
Worzel, Count, 307

Y

"Yabédy," 110
Yagellons, The, 34
Yakovlev (alias Herzen), 299 *et seq.*
Yausa, 57
Yavorsky, 68, 70
"Year of Disaster, The," 237
Yelagin, 97, 117
Yelisey, 125
"Yermak," 295

Z

Zabczye, 43
Zagoskin, 158
Zahaidachny, 448
Zakhar Sidorich, 326, 360
Zarema, 188
Zavadovsky, 108, 137, 141
Zemphira, 188
Zemsky Sobor, 62, 73
Zemsky Sobor, suspended, 313
Zemstvo, The, 313
Zhemchuzhnikov, The brothers, 493
Zhukóvsky, 144, 168–71, 173–75

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